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MEMOIR

OF

THOMAS WILSON, Esq.

MEMOIR

OF THE

LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF

THOMAS WILSON, ESQ.

TREASURER OF HIGHBURY COLLEGE.

BY HIS SON.

(Joshua Wilson)

Second Thousand.

41408
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PREFACE TO THE SECOND THOUSAND.

THE reception which this work has met with from that portion of the periodical press, the conductors of which have deemed it worthy of any particular notice, has been gratifying to the author. An higher encouragement has been derived from the fact, which has fallen under his own knowledge, that in more than one instance an effect so decidedly beneficial has been produced on the reader's mind, as to lead, by the blessing of God, to important practical results. It is a source of peculiar gratification to the author that the publication of this Memoir has contributed, in some degree, to diffuse the spirit of expansive liberality which led his honoured father to consecrate a large amount of property to the building of houses devoted to God; and he cannot refrain from publicly expressing the delight with which he has observed, that since the work appeared, a new and more powerful impulse has been given, among the Congregational Nonconformists of London, to the erection of chapels in those large suburban towns which are rapidly springing up in all directions round the vast metropolis of our country. To his own mind nothing appears more clearly, than the urgent imperative duty, devolving especially upon those who by birth, residence, or other circumstances, are immediately connected with the metropolis, to adopt the most active measures and to raise the most liberal contributions in order to multiply large and commodious chapels in the constantly extending inhabited region around that already immense city.

He will venture here to record his own firm, deliberate conviction, that if the English Independents desire in the most effectual manner to advance the highest interest of their country, by promoting the eternal welfare of their fellow-countrymen, they will combine their energies to carry forward this work in the populous cities and towns of England. By erecting fifty appropriate edifices in London, and fifty more in the larger towns, consecrated to the public worship of God, and the faithful preaching of the Gospel, we should, he is firmly persuaded, more effectually promote the cause of our Lord and Saviour than by any other means.

Many changes have taken place since this work first appeared. Several honoured individuals, whose names occur in its pages, have been removed by death. Among these the writer may be permitted to mention his own beloved mother, who, herself habitually arrayed in all the lovely, attractive graces of the Christian character, and adorned with the softer virtues of her sex, especially that most precious jewel, "a meek and quiet spirit," was through a long course of years her husband's judicious adviser and true helpmeet. She fell asleep, on the 14th of April, 1847, in the 85th year of her age.

There is one important change, of very recent occurrence, to which the author feels impelled briefly to advert—the sale of Highbury College. To alienate that building from the original purpose to which it was appropriated, may appear to some, like destroying the best earthly monument of its chief founder; but in matters pertaining to the kingdom of God, more comprehensive views must be taken, and personal considerations occupy a very subordinate place. As Highbury College was a great improvement upon Hoxton Academy, so, he believes, will the new collegiate edifice about to be erected in the Finchley-road, St. John's Wood, be a great improvement upon Highbury College. The public mind is making rapid progress in general intelligence, and the ministry of the orthodox Dissenters must keep pace with that advance. The union of colleges will, he feels confident, prove no *weakening* of our cause. Three united will more effectually promote the common design of their respective founders than three continuing apart. "A *threefold* cord is not quickly broken." Not only does the writer fervently hope—he also confidently expects, that the great object on which his father's heart was intent, will, by the Divine blessing, be more completely secured by this united college than it could have been by the separate existence in perpetuity of Highbury College and of the two other valuable and time-honoured institutions* with which it will be intimately associated. That object was—the training, by an appropriate course of preparatory study, of a race of men thoroughly furnished for the great work of converting sinners to the faith in Christ, and feeding the churches with true knowledge and understanding derived from the Scriptures. The preachers which our churches need, are—men full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, who, not shunning to declare the whole counsel of God, will yet deem it their especial vocation to testify the Gospel of the grace of God—men determined to know nothing among their hearers in comparison with the GRAND THEME, the all-pervading topic—Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

J. W.

HIGHBURY PLACE,
May 7th, 1849.

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* Homerton College and Coward College.

PREFACE.

In undertaking to prepare for the press a memoir of my late beloved and venerated father, I was deeply sensible of the difficulties inseparable from so delicate a task, as well as of the solemn responsibility which would devolve upon me; and should scarcely have ventured to attempt that task and to incur that responsibility, had I not been encouraged by the kind advice and opinion of friends for whom I feel the highest regard, and whose judgment is entitled to great respect and deference: I may particularly mention Rev. Dr. Philip, of Cape Town, South Africa, Rev. Dr. Sprague, of Albany, United States, and Rev. J. A. James, of Birmingham. To all these friends I am also indebted for valuable contributions, which will be found in the following pages.

My father, some years before his death, intimated that he had left some written memorials concerning himself. These did not prove so copious and minute as I expected and hoped to find them. They consisted merely of brief and hastily penned notes, expressed in his own concise and laconic style, chiefly relating to the chapels which he had been the instrument of erecting, and the Christian churches and congregations which he had been the means of raising. Even in this part of the narrative, I found that much farther inquiry and research were required, in order to ascertain exact dates and minute circumstances.

When this work was commenced,—indeed, after considerable progress had been made,—I little anticipated the amount of labour that was before me. As I proceeded, my materials greatly increased through the kind contribution of numerous letters, from which it became no easy task to select facts, incidents, and characteristic passages.

Dr. Philip, during his last visit to Europe, in 1836–7, suggested to me the propriety of committing to writing some observations concerning my honoured father, who was then declining in physical strength, and at my request he furnished me, after his return to Cape Town, with some valuable notes—the result of his own personal knowledge and observation during a long and intimate acquaintance—leaving it to my own discretion to make such use of them as I might think proper. After consideration, I determined to incorporate with the memoir, such portions of these notes as relate to matters of fact, and therefore admitted of being interwoven with the thread of the narrative, and to insert the remainder, consisting chiefly of reflections, at the close.

Without making any pretensions to unmixed purity of motive, I may with truth affirm that, in the preparation of this work, my chief aim has been, practical usefulness. The public good should, indeed, be the end and aim of all writing for the press—especially of biography; but to have written the life of Thomas Wilson, a man devoted to usefulness, without having this great end in view throughout, would have been inexcusable. I also felt that my father's close connexion with the Congregational denomination, and his earnest desire to promote its increased efficiency and usefulness, rendered occasional hints and suggestions tending to that important object, appropriate.

To those numerous friends who kindly and promptly forwarded letters in their possession, and some of them, also, valuable information, I feel much indebted. As most of their names will appear in the following pages, they will I trust dispense with a more formal and particular acknowledgment. I must, however, tender my thanks to the Rev. George Collison, for a kind contribution, accompanied by a friendly suggestion, which he will see I have practically adopted, (as indeed I had done previously to receiving it)—that the history of Highbury College should not be detached from the memoir of my father.

For the series of letters, from which copious extracts will be found, pp. 241—248, I am indebted to the Rev. Thomas Russell, of Walworth, to whom they were addressed.

I know not whether it is necessary for me to enter into any explanation in order to account for the long delay which has taken place in the publication of this book beyond the time originally fixed. I will only say that the work extended to a *much* greater length than I at first expected, as well as involved a *much* greater amount of labour than I anticipated. I have acted upon the advice of several friends, who recommended me not to precipitate the publication; and I trust, in consequence of the delay, the work will be found somewhat less unworthy of the public notice.

It only remains for me to commend the book, with all its imperfections, to the candour of the reader, and especially to the blessing of that God who can make the feeblest instrumentality the means of advancing His own glory and the good of His creatures.

JOSHUA WILSON.

Highbury Place, July 11, 1846.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

If the province of biography be, to teach by example—a mode of teaching, the superior efficacy of which is universally admitted—the force and impressiveness of its lessons must greatly depend on the degree of similarity and resemblance existing between the situation and circumstances of the party represented, and those of the persons addressed.

On this principle, there appears to be a great defect in the Christian biography of England—a defect which the following pages are intended, as an humble contribution, in some measure to supply.

A large portion of our religious biography, published during the last two centuries, consists of memoirs of ministers of the Gospel—in distinction from Christians occupying more private stations in the church. The elders are, indeed, required to be "examples to the flock;"* and Paul, on more than one occasion, presented himself in this character. He thus addressed the Philippians: "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample"—and "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do."* He even waived his right to receive support from some of the churches which he had planted, and laboured with his own hands night and day, that he might render himself an example of industry to his converts.†

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* 1 Peter v. 1, 3.

But obviously, as a general rule, individuals of a certain class furnish the best and most impressive examples to persons belonging to the same class—a poor man to poor men—an artizan to artizans—a tradesman to tradesmen. Rich men will be most successfully taught their duties, and most effectually persuaded to practise them, by the examples of persons in the same circumstances, who exhibited in their conduct a practical illustration of the true value and legitimate uses of wealth.

The nonconformist churches of England have afforded rich materials for this varied and diversified biography; but by far the largest portion of what has been preserved and recorded relates to persons belonging to the pastoral or ministerial order.‡

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* ch. iii. 17; iv. 9.

† 2 Thess. iii. 7—12.

‡ In all our English collections of general biography I believe the alphabetical arrangement is adopted—the most convenient mode, certainly, to facilitate reference; but great advantages would result from a classified distribution, such as that adopted by a German writer, Melchior Adam, who published, in separate volumes, the lives of eminent men belonging to different professions, entitled, 'Vitæ Eruditorum, Theologorum, Politicorum, et Juris-consultorum, tum Germanorum, tum Exterorum, ab anno 1500 usque ad 1618.' Printed at Heidelberg in 4 vols. 1615—1621.

Dr. Calamy took great pains to collect materials for the lives of that illustrious band of confessors, who, after the restoration of King Charles the Second, gave up their livings, and many of them their earthly all, to preserve inviolate that inestimable treasure—"a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men;" but he passed with brief occasional notice, those scarcely less memorable individuals—such as the truly *noble* Philip Lord Wharton—by whom they were protected, patronised, and, in a great measure, supported; and through whose zealous and active co-operation they were enabled to become founders of a body of Christian churches, which have been a great blessing to the nation.*

From some acquaintance with the doings of these excellent men, and their immediate successors, I do not hesitate to affirm, that had their biography been carefully preserved, they would have furnished examples, not only to merchants and professional men, but also to nobility and gentry, to magistrates and legislators.†

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* An exception to the above remark might be made in reference to the biographical writings of old Samuel Clark, of Bennet Fink, who has introduced the lives of several eminent persons not in the ministry. The Rev. Benjamin Brook, now of Birmingham, published in 1813, in 3 vols. 8vo. a very interesting collection, entitled "The Lives of the Puritans;" but he restricted his researches to those who were engaged in the ministry of the Gospel. The writer of a review of this work, in the Christian Observer, justly remarked, that it would have been more correctly entitled "Lives of the Puritan *Divines*."

† I may, perhaps, be permitted to mention, that many years ago I formed a design of publishing a collection of lives to illustrate the loyalty, patriotism, and public spirit of the English Protestant Dissenters. The materials collected for this purpose will be carefully

Happily, however, the few lives of laymen which we do possess relate to men of the highest order of excellence, and who deserve to be regarded as models in their respective departments—Joseph Williams, of a religious tradesman; Colonel Gardiner, of a devout soldier; John Howard, of a devoted Christian philanthropist.*

There is another eminent individual, the model of a religious merchant, whom I cannot refrain from mentioning, who, although not himself a nonconformist, was a generous friend to their ministers, and a liberal supporter of their cause; not, indeed, as by an unhappy phraseology, it is sometimes termed, "the dissenting interest," but as the cause of evangelical truth and Christian piety—I refer to the late excellent John Thornton. That no distinct and full memoir of this munificent and princely giver has hitherto been published is deeply to be lamented as a serious loss, not to say injury, to the Christian world. May we not be permitted to hope that, in this publishing age, when many memoirs of eminent persons long since deceased have been introduced to public notice, some authentic record of his noble career of active bene-

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preserved, and hereafter, probably, deposited in the Congregational Library, to assist in the accomplishment of such a design, at some future time, when orthodox Dissenters may feel greater interest than they have yet manifested in the lives of their predecessors—particularly the fathers and founders of their churches.

* Sir Thomas Abney might be justly regarded as the model of a pious and patriotic magistrate and civic functionary, but his life has not been fully written, and is now very little known.

ficence may yet be produced? The example of a truly Christian merchant, presented in this age of adventurous enterprise and reckless speculation, might be of incalculable service.

I have now to present, not merely to the nonconformist churches, but to the Christian community—the example of a man who, being engaged in a lucrative branch of British manufacture, retired from the active engagements of business at a comparatively early period of life—not to enjoy the fruits of his past labours, but to labour more abundantly for the advancement of the cause of his heavenly Master, to devote himself to the work of the Lord, and consecrate his energies to the advancement of the glory of God, in promoting the eternal interests of his fellow-men. To many, I trust, this example will speak more powerfully and eloquently than any words which the writer could employ.

May I request that every reader will unite with me in the prayer that, by the blessing of God, many who read the following lines may be "provoked to emulation," and excited to become followers of him so far as he was a follower of that Saviour who "went about doing good," and whose memorable words were deeply impressed on his heart, and largely verified in his experience—"It is more blessed to give than to receive."

CHAPTER II.

NOTICES OF MY FATHER'S FAMILY—BRIEF ACCOUNT OF HIS PARENTS.

I CANNOT more appropriately introduce this memoir than by a slight biographical sketch (the best that existing materials enable me to furnish) of the parents of him who will form its principal subject.

The family of Wilson, from which my honoured father sprang, had long been resident in the southern part of Derbyshire, which is separated by the river Trent from the adjoining county of Leicester. It was a family originally possessing no note of eminence to distinguish it from the mass of English yeomen; but the providence of God, in a remarkable manner, singled out and separated for himself many of its members, and has conferred high honour upon it, by rendering several of them distinguished for piety, benevolence, and usefulness in various departments of active service.

Thomas Wilson, the fifth of eleven children of John Wilson, and Anne his wife, daughter of John Henshaw, of Barracoat—was born January 3, 1731, at Stenson, (a township in the chapelry of Twyford, and parish of Barrow-upon-Trent, about five miles from Derby,) where his father occupied a small freehold, and rented a farm belonging to Sir John Harpur, of Calke, Bart., which had been in the occupation of his ancestors for several preceding generations, and continued in that of his eldest son, and grandson.

He received an English education, probably at neighbouring schools; but his advantages in early life were, I have reason to believe, but moderate. He was taken to London, when in his seventeenth year, by his father—for what precise purpose does not appear, but some expressions which occur in a family memorandum would lead to the supposition that it was in order to his being placed in some situation of business. They set out from Stenson May 25, 1747, and reached London about the 30th. His father, during the whole of his stay there, was unwell, and when he left on his return, June 9, had become "very ill;" but having a great desire to see his wife and children, whom he had left at home, he prosecuted his journey, becoming worse as he advanced, until he reached Leicester, where the hand of death arrested him on the 11th, and his body was brought, according to his own desire, to be buried at Twyford. Of his piety I cannot speak decidedly. His widow, after a lingering illness, died July 8, 1755, aged 57, leaving seven children. Her youngest son states, that during this illness she manifested great resignation to the will of God, and "made an happy end."

The next fact in my grandfather's life that I find recorded is, his going to St. Kitt's, in the West Indies, in 1749. After continuing there between two and three years, and "escaping many dangers," he returned to England in October, 1752. Upon his return he settled in Coventry, entering upon the world with no prospect of obtaining independence, except by his own diligence and industry. During about a year he held only a subordinate situation, and then for a short time was in partnership with a younger brother, named William.

He married, June 30, 1754, Mary, the only daughter of Mr. John Remington, a cloth-worker in Coventry, who is described as "a very agreeable lady;" and October 28th, entered into partnership in the ribbon trade with his elder brother Stephen, who conducted a branch of the business which was carried on in London, where he died of a fever, after a short illness, October 20, 1755, leaving a widow and four children; the eldest, John, afterwards well known as principal manager of the Tabernacle, London.

The Remington family were Dissenters, and belonged to the old Presbyterian meeting-house in Smithford street, Coventry.* My grandfather, after his marriage, attended at that place. It was probably very much through his wife's influence that he became a Dissenter, for I do not find that the family at Stenson had attended either the Presbyterian meeting-house at Derby, or the one at Findern—very near the place of their residence, at which Dr. Ebenezer Latham, who kept an academy there, preached for many years.*

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* A branch of this family lived at Northampton, where they attended the ministry of Dr. Doddridge.

Shortly after the death of Mr. Stephen Wilson, some fresh arrangements were made for carrying on the business. A new partnership was entered into, December 15, 1755, between his widow and my grandfather; and it was determined that the latter should remove to London, to take the oversight of that branch of the concern which was carried on there, and the former remove to Coventry, to superintend the manufactory. This event — the removal of my grand-parents to London—was over-ruled by the gracious providence of God, both for their temporal advantage, and for their spiritual benefit.

My grandmother, who left her native city contrary to her own inclination, had been previously warned against the Methodists, who were then numerous in London, and cautioned not to hear any of their preachers. Having received such a charge, one of the thoughts most remote from their minds, in looking forward to the future, would be—that the founder of the Tabernacle, the leader of one branch of the London Methodists, was, ere long, to number them among his warm admirers and personal friends. On their first arrival in the metropolis they attended at the meeting-house in the Old Jewry, (not far from their residence in Aldermanbury,) of which the learned Dr. Samuel Chandler was then the minister. To him they had probably been recommended by the minister at Coventry, Mr. Ebenezer Fletcher. It does not appear that at this time either of them was a truly spiritual Christian, and the preaching of Dr. Chandler, although not without a tincture of evangelical doctrine, was of a kind little adapted to produce spiritual effect, being destitute of that affectionate earnestness and animation which appear to be indispensable, in order to the production of deep and permanent impressions on the hearts of the hearers.

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* The eldest brother John, who resided at Stenson, was, in the later years of his life, a truly pious man, and received Methodist preachers into his house. He died in 1789.

They had not been long resident in London, when a memorable event occurred which, although apparently the result of accidental circumstances, led, under the guidance of Divine Providence, to momentous results. My grandmother, one Saturday evening, taking a walk with a female friend in the direction of Moorfields, passed the Tabernacle, which at that time was separated from the city by open country. Inquiring to what purpose that building was appropriated, she was informed that it was the place in which Mr. Whitefield was accustomed to preach. She acted the wise part, laid prejudice aside, and determined, as service was about to be held, to go in and hear him, that she might be able to judge for herself. Mr. Whitefield did not preach that evening, but she heard Mr. Kinsman, of Plymouth, whose text was, "My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word." She was so much pleased with the sermon, that, on her return home, she said to her husband, "If I go to hear such preaching I shall certainly become a Methodist." My grandfather replied, "We will both go together and hear Mr. Whitefield." They did so several times—particularly on Saturday evenings, and obtained, by the blessing of God, great spiritual benefit. They became lively and zealous professors of the gospel of the grace of God, invited Mr. Whitefield to their house, and became attached both to his person and ministry. They soon after joined the Independent church meeting at Haberdashers' Hall, Staining lane, into which they were admitted in October, 1760.*

The church then assembling at the above place was one of the most ancient Congregational churches in the city. It was originally gathered in the year 1650 by Mr. William Strong, an eminent Puritan divine, and met in Westminster Abbey, many of the members being parliament men and persons of rank. Its next pastor was Mr. John Rowe, to whom succeeded the learned Theophilus Gale, author of 'The Court of the Gentiles.' He was followed by Dr. Watts's tutor, Thomas Rowe, his son, Benoni Rowe, John Foxon, and Robert Wright, who died April 22, 1743. Thomas Gibbons, (afterwards D.D.,) was ordained the pastor October 27, 1743.* Dr. Gibbons, though he belonged to the regular Dissenters, and was one of the tutors of the Academy, since removed to Homerton, was not, like most of his brethren, cold, stiff, and formal, either in the pulpit, or in the intercourse of private life. He was, on the contrary, warm, lively, and earnest, as a preacher; sedulously attentive to his flock, as a pastor; eminently amiable, benevolent, and affectionate, as a man. His conversation and address were, in a high degree, engaging and attractive; and even the rugged Dr. Johnson, although no lover of Dissenters, was not insensible to his agreeable manners.†

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* The following is the record of the event in Dr. Gibbons's MS. journal, now in the writer's possession. "1760, Oct. 31, Friday. Preached in the afternoon from Isa. liii. 8, the preparatory sermon, [to the Lord's supper;] Mr. Wilson and his wife admitted into the church by a testimonial from Mr. Fletcher of Coventry."

Dr. Gibbons was liberal and catholic in his views and feelings. He was one of the few Dissenting ministers of his time who were able to appreciate Whitefield, to whom he paid a visit on board the vessel that was to convey that apostolical man on his last voyage across the Atlantic, in 1769. Whitefield, referring to this visit, describes him by the appropriate epithet, "warm-hearted Dr. Gibbons."‡

On April 4, 1766, my grandfather was chosen one of the deacons of the church at Haberdashers' Hall; and few who have sustained that honourable office have been more eminently endowed with the requisite qualifications as they are laid down by the apostle Paul in his first Epistle to Timothy, iii. 8—13. He had been *proved*, and found blameless and irreproachable, and he used the office of a deacon well.* He attended the meeting-house on the morning and afternoon of the Lord's-day, frequenting the Tabernacle in the evening, and on some week evenings.

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* History and Antiquities of Dissenting Churches in London. By Walter Wilson, vol. iii. pp. 148—178.

† "Dr. Gibbons, the Dissenting minister, being mentioned in 1781, he said, 'I took to Dr. Gibbons;' and addressing himself to Mr. Charles Dilly, [a Dissenting bookseller] added, 'I shall be glad to see him. Tell him, if he'll come and dawdle over a dish of tea of an afternoon, I shall take it kind.'" In 1784 Dr. Gibbons was one of a party who dined with Dr. Johnson at Mr. Dilly's house. Life by Boswell, 6th edition, 1840, vol. iv. pp. 134, 135, 305.

‡ Collection of Letters, vol. iii. p. 397.

The following are extracts from a letter dated London, December 27, 1768, to his nephew and partner Mr. John Wilson.

"I am obliged to you for the account you give of my little son, and glad to hear you had a good journey to Coventry. I wish you happy in your friends; and in that 'Friend who sticketh closer than a brother.' I know you love the house of God, and delight to hear of the glorious glad tidings of salvation that are proclaimed so freely and so fully in this great city and the suburbs thereof; and I have no doubt but you have tasted of the good word of life, and felt the powers of the world to come. This is a mercy for which God can never be enough blessed and praised; and where God hath given this talent, O let us not tie it up in a napkin, but improve it to the glory of that free grace which hath bestowed it! I fear you will not find the public ordinances of God and the means of grace so frequent or so lively at Coventry as they are in London, especially at this season, but the Lord can well supply all these deficiencies by the gift of his blessed Self; and if we enjoy the fountain, we shall less want the streams. Mr. Whitefield met us last Sabbath-day evening at the Tabernacle, and I think I never heard him with more power and life than then. It being the evening of Christmas-day, he was more fully and immediately upon the occasion of that season. His first words were, 'I hope I meet you to-night, as the angels met the shepherds when they first came to preach Jesus Christ. They were watching their flocks by night, and I hope we are all watching our hearts by night.' He showed what were the spirit and views with which good men of old instituted and kept Christmas, but how woefully perverted in these days. When we commemorate the birth of Christ, should not we bring our thoughts home and examine our hearts, and see if the blessed Jesus holds his residence there, and if Christ is in us the hope of glory? * * * I beg your prayers in your best moments for strong faith,—that faith which works by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world; and may that God who heareth prayer, send a gracious answer for Jesus Christ's sake! * * *

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* Few readers will need to be informed that Congregational Dissenters regard this office as having been appointed for the due care and administration of the secular concerns of the church. This they think clearly appears from its original institution, recorded Acts vi. 1—4.

"There hath been preaching twice a day all this week at Mr. Whitefield's and Mr. Wesley's [chapels]; and at Mr. Romaine's [church] every day once. O Lord! succeed the labours of thy servants, and crown the means with thy blessing and abundant success.

"Your loving uncle,

"THOMAS WILSON."

This letter, which relates in part to matters of business, shows that the writer possessed an eminently devout and spiritual mind.

In 1777, he took a lease for a long term of years, of the house No. 12, Highbury place, which has continued ever since in the occupation of members of the family. He continued, however, to attend regularly at Haberdashers' Hall, and to accommodate his family during the interval between the morning and afternoon services, engaged the use of a room in a neighbouring house. The acquaintance formed between the worthy pastor of the church and this worthy deacon gradually advanced to intimacy, and ultimately ripened into friendship. The good doctor, in the record kept by him of his disposal of the hours of every successive day, in which he was accustomed to enter the names of those friends at whose hospitable tables he was entertained, frequently mentions dining with Mr. Wilson in Wood street, and occasionally paying visits of sympathy in seasons of affliction.*

In a copy of a volume of sermons by Dr. Gibbons, in my father's library, I find the following inscription written on the fly-leaf at the beginning. "The gift of the author to his long experienced and beloved friend, Mr. Thomas Wilson, Feb. 7, 1783."

My grandfather could not but feel deeply affected with the moral and spiritual condition of his native county, to which he always felt a strong attachment. That romantic county, containing so many scenes and objects fitted to charm the eye of the man of taste, was then, religiously considered, little better than a moral wilderness. The number of pious evangelical ministers in the parish churches was very small, and the Presbyterian Dissenters (the prevailing body in that county) had sunk into Arianism, and become reduced to a very low state in respect to their numbers, and still lower in respect to religious feeling. Some commencement of a revival in Derby might have been made by the preaching of the Rev. W. Romaine in one of the parish churches, the use of which had been refused to him on several previous visits to that place. He also preached in other neighbouring churches.*

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* The following is the first entry of this kind:—"1759, December 31, Visited Mr. Wilson in Wood street, in illness, and prayed with him."

Mr. Thomas Jones, from Lady Huntingdon's College at Trevecca, came over from Melbourn in 1778, and preached in the market-place at Derby. A room was shortly afterwards engaged, in which he and Mr. Joseph Griffith, another of the students whom Lady Huntingdon had sent to his assistance, occasionally preached, the services being previously announced by the town-crier. In 1779, my grandfather undertook to procure ministers at his own expense to supply the congregation regularly. The first of these was Mr. Hewett, afterwards of Bedworth, who was succeeded by Mr. Middleton, a student from Trevecca, afterwards pastor of a Baptist church at Lewes.

Mr. Joseph Thomas was sent by my grandfather early in 1781. He had been some time a student at the English Academy, and was a young man of eminent piety and of very amiable temper. His affectionate strain of preaching rendered him popular ; but taking a fever from a family which he visited, he was cut off at an early age, February 3, 1783. His labours during the short time of their continuance were attended with great success, and his death was deeply lamented. Mr. James Edwards, afterwards of Wilton, was the next minister, but remained only a few months; during which, the congregation removed to a barn which had been fitted up as a place of worship. He was succeeded by Mr. Thomas Bryson, who had been educated at Trevecca. Having there imbibed the spirit of an evangelist, he was in labours abundant, preaching in the open air at Derby, and in neighbouring villages; but some differences unhappily occurring, a secession took place, and my grandfather, sympathising with the seceders, purchased, in September, 1783, freehold premises in the centre of the town, (Brook-side,) upon which he erected, at his own expense, (with the exception of an amount which he required the congregation to raise,*) a respectable brick building for a meeting-house, the dimensions of which were fifty-four feet by forty-eight, with a convenient vestry-room. This building was opened in the following summer. The late Rev. George Burder has preserved an account of the services that were held on the occasion—

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* Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii. p. 278.

"June 5, 1784, I was at Derby, to assist in opening a commodious chapel built in great part by the generosity of Thomas Wilson, Esq., of London, who had supported in great measure the expenses of preaching at Derby, near his native place, for some time. Mr.

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* The sum mentioned by him was one hundred pounds; but I have some reason to believe that not more than fifty or sixty pounds were actually contributed.

Scott* preached in the morning; I preached in the afternoon ; Mr. Matthew Wilks in the evening.

" Many ministers and Christian friends from various places having been collected together from the country, Mr. Wilson wished to render the meeting a kind of jubilee. Sermons were therefore preached for several successive mornings and evenings; Mr. Scott on Monday morning, and I in the evening. Mr. Plumbe of Nottingham, was to have preached on Tuesday morning, but being taken ill, I preached in his stead, and set off for Coventry after breakfast."†

This noble attempt to plant the standard of the cross in the centre of a large and important town near the place of his birth, did not meet with immediate and full success. For some time the attendance at the chapel was not large; but my grandfather obtained the services of many popular ministers from London and other places as supplies. Among these was the Rev. Thomas Pentycross, M. A., rector of Wallingford, Berks, a man of genius and learning, who consecrated all his energies to the preaching of Christ crucified: and who, like some other pious clergymen of that time, was in the habit of preaching at Surrey Chapel. At my grandfather's request, he supplied the meeting at

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* This excellent man was commonly called Captain Scott, having been a captain in the 7th regiment of Dragoons. He was converted through the ministry of Mr. Romaine. After preaching occasionally for some time in his regimentals, he sold his commission and devoted himself to the stated ministry of the Gospel. See the Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. i. pp. 317—319.

† Memoir of Rev. George Burder, pp. 130, 131.

Derby, for several weeks. The first stated minister of the congregation was Mr. John Smith, who had been admitted a student at the Mile End Academy, Sept. 9, 1785, and who was ordained pastor of the church, Oct. 11, 1787. He, also, during his residence in Derby, frequently preached in the open air as well as in neighbouring villages. He resigned his charge at midsummer, 1792.*

A few extracts from letters addressed to his niece, Mrs. Moore, of Derby,† will show my grandfather's unabated concern for the spiritual interests of his native county, notwithstanding the obstacles which impeded the progress of the work.

Referring to a minister who had been preaching at Derby, and whom the people were proposing to invite, he expresses a natural and not unreasonable wish that this minister should be acceptable to the members of his family who attended at the meeting-house, and adds—

Sept. 7, 1792.—"If he is a man likely to be a blessing to

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* That my grandfather contributed liberally towards his support, will appear from the following entries in an old account book:—

	£.	s.	d.
1791, Aug. 29, by Derby meeting to Midsummer	25	3	2½
1792, Jan. 17, by Derby meeting paid Rev. Mr. Smith	11	16	3
— June 23, by Rev. Mr. Smith of Derby	3	0	0
— June 24, Rev. Mr. Smith for Derby	10	10	6

† Mother of Ambrose Moore, Esq., of Milk-street, Cheapside, by whom I have been kindly favoured with the free use of several letters of my grandfather's in his possession, addressed to his mother.

the town at large, I shall cheerfully acquiesce and bless God, for directing you all to such a choice. I hope the people at Derby will be well informed about Mr. S. before they invite him to settle."

November 9, 1792.—"I apprehend the people at Derby will not meet with a minister that will please *all* and promise *general usefulness*, so easily as they expected. I was willing the people should try to please themselves; and if they can get a minister that is in general acceptable, and who appears to be calculated for further extensive usefulness, I shall be glad and thankful; but my desire for the spread of the Gospel and conversion of souls at and about Derby is the same (I hope) as heretofore; and if it should be found necessary, I shall again provide supplies, till a minister may come that shall appear to be of the Lord's sending, and likely to prove the happy instrument in the Lord's hand of good to precious souls, which we all wish for.

"I am glad the Gospel is planted at Barrow.* May the Lord cause the blessed seed sown there to take deep root and bring forth abundant fruit! Give my love to your brother John. I hope he will find much comfort by hearing the word at Barrow, and O that many of our poor friends and neighbours at Twyford and Stenson may be induced to go and hear, and so to hear as that their souls may live!"

Dec. 17, 1792.—"I am glad to hear you go on well at the meeting. If the people can get a proper and useful minister, it is all I wish. While I live, I desire to do every thing in my power for the support and spread of the Gospel at Derby," &c.

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* It appears from entries in his accounts, that in the year 1793, he contributed a considerable sum towards the support of the Rev. Mr. Smith, of Barrow.

Jan. 10th, 1794.—" I am glad to hear that Mr. Browning is acceptable. May the Lord make him abundantly successful in pulling down the strong holds of sin and Satan, and winning many precious souls to the dear Redeemer!

" I have been informed that some of the people who have long shown an opposing and hostile spirit are much softened, and act more consistently with their profession as followers of the Lamb. May this happy change be more and more manifested! If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

The early history of this congregation clearly proves the evils resulting to newly-formed churches, from having a great variety of ministers successively preaching to them, especially when anything like party-spirit gains a footing among their members.*

My grandfather's efforts and contributions were not limited to the chapel founded by him at Derby. He directed his attention to other parts of the county, and made efforts to revive decayed interests, or to establish new ones, in several places. About the year 1789, he obtained possession of the Presbyterian meeting-house at Ashbourn, and contributed to the support of a minister there. This meeting-house was sold after the building of the present larger and more commodious chapel, erected in the year 1800, at the sole expense of Mr. John Cooper, of London, a native of this town, who erected a dwelling-house for the minister, and also built and endowed seven almshouses for poor aged women.* In 1789 my grandfather obtained the old Presbyterian meeting-house at Alvaston, which had been shut up for several years, and which was supplied for some time, under his patronage, on Lord's-day afternoons by the minister of the Independent chapel at Derby.†

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* A settled minister was not obtained until the year 1800, when the present valuable senior pastor (Rev. James Gawthorn) settled at Derby, since which time there have been undisturbed peace and growing prosperity. In the year 1803 the accommodation was increased by the erection of a gallery in front of the chapel, and subsequently, of galleries on each side. In 1836 the walls were raised six feet, and other improvements effected. I have not been able to ascertain what the original chapel cost.

In 1789 and 1790 he assisted in the support of the infant cause at Belper near Derby,‡ sending Mr. Rice Jones as a supply, and contributing liberally for the first year.§ He also afforded pecuniary assistance toward carrying on the cause of God at Melbourn.

In 1791 and 1792 he gave £5 a quarter to assist in supporting evangelical preaching in Bakewell. The beginning in that place was very humble,—a barn was fitted up in 1790, and used for several years; but by the blessing of God, through many difficulties, the cause has been sustained, and has gradually, although slowly, increased. A chapel was built in 1805, enlarged in

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* See Congregational Magazine for 1823, p. 52.

† Ib. p. 51.

‡ Ib. p. 108.

§ A flourishing cause has since been established here under the efficient ministry of a venerable man, to whom I am indebted for some information concerning my grandfather,—the Rev. T. R. Gawthorne. On Christmas-day, 1840, being the fiftieth anniversary of his connexion with the church, a purse containing two hundred and thirty sovereigns was presented to him by members of the congregation, as a token of affectionate esteem.

1823; and a new and elegant chapel, with school-rooms underneath, was opened in October, 1844.

He may justly, therefore, be represented as the principal founder of modern Congregational nonconformity in his native county, particularly the southern portion of it, and as one of the first contributors on a large scale to home missionary and evangelising operations. He was accustomed to pay a visit to Stenson every year, but he did not regard the neighbourhood of that place with mere sentiments of personal and private attachment. He looked at his native county, and especially its largest and most important town, with the eye of a Christian philanthropist. Of a Roman centurion, although a stranger, the Jews could bring this testimony to Jesus—"He loveth our nation, and hath built us a synagogue." That man is the true lover, the best friend of his country, or of any particular locality, who, in the exercise of a sound discretion, supplies the means to increase the number of buildings appropriated to the preaching of Christ. The blessings of future and remote generations will descend upon him; and to the end of time, his heart will be gladdened by the congratulations of regenerated natives of the spiritual Zion, of whom it will be said, "This and that man was born there."

My grandfather was one of the founders of the chapel at West Orchard, Coventry,* to the erection of which he contributed, in April 1782, £100. The late Rev. Matthew Wilks was invited to become the minister of the congregation gathered in this chapel, which, after full consideration, he declined to accept, "chiefly from a sense of his own inability for a stated pastoral charge." In 1783, the late Rev. George Burder received an unanimous invitation to become the pastor. The increase of the congregation rendered necessary the erection of galleries, and in February next Mr. B. came to London to collect toward the expense that had been incurred.* He returned in March, having obtained £130, of which, in all probability, my grandfather contributed a considerable portion. He also assisted very materially in the support of the cause of God at that place.

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* The chief founder of this chapel was Mr. Samuel Reader, of Coventry, (father of the late — Reader, Esq., barrister,) who contributed first £150, and afterwards £100.

When a movement was made, early in the year 1782, toward the erection of a chapel for the late venerable Rowland Hill, then in all the glow and freshness of youthful ardour, in the centre of one of the most depraved districts on the Surrey side of the metropolis, several leading members of the Tabernacle society withheld their countenance and support from the noble enterprise, fearing that it might injure the interests of that place; but my grandfather was one of those who encouraged this attempt to "erect a standard for the Gospel in the very middle of the devil's territories." He contributed £100 towards the building of Surrey Chapel, the first stone of which was laid June 24th, 1782, and was one of the original trustees. "How glorious," says Berridge to Lady Huntingdon, "will be the triumphs of the Gospel in that place!"* Glorious indeed they have already been.

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* Memoir of Rev. George Burder, by Dr. H. F. Burder, pp. 119, 123, 126.

In the year 1773, he was chosen churchwarden of the parish of St. Peter, West Cheap, in which he resided. Being a Dissenter, he objected to undertake this office, and proposed to execute it by deputy; but being informed that in that case he must himself take the oath required by law for a faithful discharge of its duties, he at once determined to perform them in person. He therefore set himself to a vigorous execution of the office, and entered upon it in the spirit of a reformer, seeking to remove those abuses which had crept into its administration. He would not consent to the annual dinner being paid for out of the funds of the parish, but offered his guinea as a contribution towards the expenses. It was his custom, before attending public worship on the Lord's-day morning, to walk round the parish, and see that the shops were closed, and to remove those who offered fruit or other articles for sale in the streets.

He was himself a strict observer of the Lord's-day. In proof of this it may be mentioned, that before he went to reside in Highbury place, he hired a house for the summer months at Stoke Newington, but instead of spending the Lord's-day there, his practice was, (contrary to the *modern* custom,) to bring his family to his house in the city on Saturday evening, that they might more conveniently attend public worship. He was a nonconformist of the good old Puritan school, strictly conscientious, and constantly striving to walk in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord blameless, retaining all the close habitual regard to the will of God for which those excellent men were distinguished, without any of the demure austerity and rigid stiffness and scrupulosity which are commonly, although with questionable truth, ascribed to them.

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* Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii. pp. 319, 320.

He was, in fact, one of the most friendly, sociable, kind-hearted, amiable, and benevolent of men,—ready to distribute, willing to communicate, forward to every good work, at a time when those who called themselves by the name of Christ were too generally supine, selfish, and inactive. He felt keenly for the injured negro race, and in January, 1792, encouraged, by a subscription of £500, the scheme, which afterwards proved a lamentable failure, for establishing a colony at Sierra Leone.*

He did not neglect the great Christian duty to remember and consider the poor. For some years before his death, he provided a dinner once a year for the poor members of the church at Haberdashers' Hall, besides contributing in other ways to their relief. One of the last entries in his private account book is—

> "The poor at Coventry, £10. 10*s*."

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* This may perhaps be more properly considered as an investment of money upon interest, but I have reason to believe that my grandfather's motive was primarily and principally benevolent.

He opened his hand *wide* unto his poor brother.* He was distinguished for excelling in the domestic and social virtues—exemplary as a husband, a father, a master; kind and affectionate as a friend; affable and courteous to all who came within the sphere of his influence; given to hospitality; and while not forgetful to entertain those who were comparatively strangers, always ready to receive with a warmer and more cordial welcome any friends or acquaintances who came to London from Derbyshire. If he heard of any such being in town, he would seek them out very diligently until he found them.

I must not omit to mention one other feature of his character,—the kindness and generosity which he showed to his nephews and other relatives. He may justly be regarded as the patron, and, in an important sense, the founder of the family. To all the various members of it he invariably showed the greatest kindness, and was always prepared to afford them the benefit of such advice as his experience in business qualified him to offer, and to render such cheerful and liberal pecuniary assistance as they might require. What he did for them he did with the greatest promptitude and readiness; and several instances might be mentioned in which he afforded seasonable and material aid.

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* I find in his private accounts for the two or three last years of his life, which happen to be preserved, entries of several gifts to widows, and other poor persons and families. He did not satisfy himself with giving a guinea, or a few guineas, annually, to an orphan school, but contributed largely, and in some instances periodically, to particular cases of indigence and distress.

He had been, for some years previously to his death, subject to a painful spasmodic affection, by which, at longer or shorter intervals, his breath was arrested, and the continuance of respiration rendered a laborious and painful effort. By suitable means, promptly administered, he obtained relief, but continued liable to renewed attacks of the same kind.

On Lord's-day, March 30, 1794, he attended the morning and afternoon services at Haberdashers' Hall, and during the whole day was in a cheerful and happy frame. In the evening, according to his usual custom when he did not attend public worship, he read a sermon to his family. The discourse which he selected, or which came in course that night, was one of Whitefield's, from Psalm cvii. 30, 31, "Then they are glad, because they are at rest: so he bringeth them unto their desired haven. O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" It was "a Farewell Sermon, preached May 17, 1738, on board the Whitaker, at anchor near Savannah, in Georgia;" and in the concluding portion the devoted preacher thus addressed his hearers, "But I must away to your new world; may God give you new hearts, and enable you to put in practice what you have heard from time to time, to be your duty! For then God will bless you. . . . . In short, then shall the Lord be your God; and as surely as he has now brought us to this haven, where we would be, so surely, after we have passed through the storms and tempests of this troublesome world, will he bring us to the haven of eternal rest, where we shall have nothing to do, but to praise him for ever for his goodness, and declare, in never-ceasing songs of praise, the wonders he has done for us and all the other sons of men. To which blessed rest, God, of his infinite mercy, bring us all, through Jesus Christ our Lord." *

My grandfather retired to rest at his usual time, and in his usual state of health; but soon after midnight, he was seized with a spasmodic fit. My grandmother immediately gave an alarm, and the servants were speedily collected around his bed. The usual means of relief were applied, but without effect. The God "in whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind," and who, at the appointed time, "taketh away our breath," and remands our bodies to the dust, was pleased to withdraw that sustaining hand which "holdeth our soul in life," and to receive his liberated spirit to that blessed sabbatical rest which remaineth for the people of God, after the labours and sufferings of this mortal life are ended.

His remains were interred in a vault in Bunhill-fields burying-ground, which, I believe, he had himself purchased. His own body was the first to take possession of that narrow cell—"the house appointed

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* Sermons on Important Subjects. 8vo., 1829, (Tegg's Edition,) pp. 98, 106, 107.

for all living." A sermon upon the occasion of his death was preached at Haberdashers' Hall meeting-house, by Mr. Brooksbank (Dr. Gibbons's successor;) but I have not been able to recover even the text.

On his tomb was placed the following appropriate inscription, drawn up by the subject of the following memoir—his elder son:

In this Vault
Lie interred the Remains of
Mr. THOMAS WILSON,
Late of Highbury Place.
Obiit March 31st, 1794. Ætat 64.
He excelled in true Friendship,
Relative Affection, and
Zeal in the service of Christ.

My grandfather, by his will, bequeathed £200 Three per cent. consolidated Bank Annuities, to "the Evangelical Academy at Hoxton;" thus more than continuing, in perpetuity, his annual subscription. Besides fifty pounds to Mr. Brooksbank, the pastor, he also bequeathed fifty pounds to the deacons of the church meeting at Haberdashers' Hall, to be distributed, at their discretion, amongst the poor of the congregation.

I cannot refrain from subjoining a few distinct notices of my honoured grandmother. She was born in Coventry, in the year 1729. Her father, Mr. John Remington, was connected with the English Presbyterian congregation, which met in what is called the Great Meeting, soon after the year 1700, and remained a subscriber and attendant till his death, which took place in September, 1732.*

When very young, she was publicly catechised—that is, examined in the Assembly's catechism,—by the minister of that congregation, Rev. John Warren, whom she used to describe as the last orthodox pastor. Doddridge speaks of him in these terms, "Mr. Warren is certainly an incomparable preacher, and it is hard to say whether his mode of address be more suited to the vulgar, or the polite. He is completely a gentleman, and perfectly master of the art of conversation."† Mr. Warren died in September, 1742. Doddridge, writing in 1723 says, "Coventry is one of the largest Dissenting congregations in England, consisting of at least 1200 people."

My grandmother was, at intervals, the subject of serious impressions from her youth, but did not become "a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus" till after her marriage and removal to London, as already related.

The advantages of education which she enjoyed in her youth were but limited, yet she possessed great mental vigour and uncommon energy of character.

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* A Mr. Remington (probably her father) appears to have been a leading member of the congregation. He, and several others, were very desirous of obtaining the services of young Philip Doddridge, to whom, in June 1724, he addressed a letter, in the name of himself and other friends at that place, proposing that he should meet some of them at Lutterworth. Doddridge, upon mature consideration, declined complying with the request of "those good friends at Coventry, whom (he says) I most sincerely value and love." See Diary and Correspondence of Dr. Doddridge, vol. i. pp. 401, 403.

† Correspondence and Diary, vol. i. p. 229.

Her natural temper was somewhat hasty, and her mental superiority, indicated by an elevated mien and towering brow, might, perhaps, induce a conscious dignity, which would account for some measure of apparent stateliness in her bearing towards domestics and inferiors. If, however, her manner was not always bland and gentle, the law of kindness ruled in her heart, and generally it was also on her tongue.

In the earlier years of her married life, although she had a numerous family of children, requiring her maternal attentions, she proved a true help-meet to her husband, even in matters of business; not shrinking, through false delicacy or affected refinement, from taking her share in the concerns of the trade, at a time when all hands were required for its establishment. She was a good and prudent wife, and the heart of her husband safely trusted in her.

She was an early riser, and retained almost to the last the custom which had been adopted in her earlier life, of having family prayers every morning at seven o'clock. I have no doubt that she began the day with God, but I can speak with certainty as to her stedfast adherence to the fixed hour of her private evening devotions, having had frequent opportunities of observing that at a certain hour (I believe eight o'clock) she was accustomed regularly to take up her wax taper, and retire to her own chamber. She acted on Sir Matthew Hale's advice, "Be obstinately constant to your devotions at certain set times."*

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* Contemplations, Moral and Divine, 1679, p. 258.

She was also remarkably attentive to family religion, and the devout worship of God regularly maintained in her house was made, by the Divine blessing, the occasion of great spiritual benefit to some of her domestics. She was in the frequent habit of entertaining Christian ministers at her table, and very rarely allowed them to leave the house without desiring them to pray with the family, whom she would sometimes call together long before the usual hour of evening prayer. She took much notice of young persons; and I had large experience of her great kindness; some of the most cheerful and sunny recollections of earlier years being associated with the pleasant summer holidays passed in her house in Highbury place.

She continued her attendance at Haberdashers' Hall on Lord's-day mornings, though the congregation had become reduced to a very small number, and it was, in several respects, inconvenient for her to frequent that place. She did this from a conscientious feeling, as she apprehended that her withdrawment might be the occasion of a serious breach. I have often heard her say—"I will not be a render of churches."

Of her it might truly be said, that she "loved the habitation of God's house." Even in extreme old age, when she could no longer preserve that erect posture which for many years she had so well maintained, when riding in her carriage was painful to her, and even walking to her pew was laborious, she would not forsake the house of her God, or neglect the public ordinances of his worship.

After suffering much from the infirmities attendant upon a period of life protracted many years beyond the allotted term, she "came to her grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in, in his season."

In her last illness she, from the first, anticipated the result, and said she had no wish to recover, but repeatedly expressed her strong desire to depart and to be with Christ, which she esteemed very much better than to abide in the flesh amidst the infirmities of a frail and feeble body; yet she did not so much desire to escape from suffering as to enter upon a state where she would never sin more. She looked forward to heaven as a world of rapturous praise, where the redeemed from among men will meet around the throne of glory, to adore the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for ever; and often had she, in previous years, expressed the longing desire of her heart, that all her children, and children's children, might meet at last to swell the grand hallelujah chorus, to God and the Lamb.

During the last few days of her life, amidst pain, restlessness, and occasional wanderings, the devotional temper of her mind was apparent. She expressed the desires of her soul in devout ejaculations addressed to her Saviour, one of which was, 'O Lord Jesus, receive me into the arms of thy mercy.' Among the memorable sayings uttered by her, the following have been preserved: 'I have nothing to trust to in myself, but I rest on the atoning blood and righteousness of my dear Redeemer—Jesus is very precious to me—I know he is able, and I believe he is willing to keep that which I have committed to him against that day—None but God can make me happy—I am waiting for the salvation of God—Joy unspeakable and full of glory! I long to be where I shall have done with this body of sin and death—I only want the wound which sin has made in my soul, cured.' So appropriate is that prayer of the Psalmist, every day of a Christian's life, and even on his dying day—"Lord, be merciful unto me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee." She looked forward to her release from "sinful flesh" with the same feelings which led an eminent divine, (Richard Baxter) when asked on his death-bed, "How he did," to reply, "Almost well." What "strong consolation" in the prospect of this great change is afforded to those "who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them," by the assurance that the fatal stroke which lays their bodies prostrate in the dust, will heal the deadly wound which sin has made in their souls, and elevate their now grovelling spirits to the heavenly Jerusalem, there to mingle with the spirits of the just made perfect! For a believer in Jesus to leave this world is to be 'dismissed from the hospital cured,' and to be received in full spiritual health and vigour into the palace of the great King, beyond the reach of all natural and moral evil.

She died on the 26th day of July, 1816, in the eighty-seventh year of her age. Two sermons were preached on the Lord's-day after her funeral, one by Mr. Brooksbank, at Haberdashers' Hall, from Rom. xiv. 9, "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living ;" the other at Hoxton Academy chapel, where she had been accustomed, for several years, to attend the evening service, by the Rev. George Burder, from Luke ii. 37: "And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, who departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day." From the account read at the close of the latter sermon, a portion of the preceding notice has been taken. The preacher, after an acquaintance of many years, bore this testimony concerning her: "I have reason to believe that our deceased friend was a truly eminent Christian."

CHAPTER III.

BRIEF NOTICE OF THE ORIGIN AND EARLY HISTORY OF HOXTON ACADEMY.

It will be proper briefly to advert to the state of religion among the Congregational Dissenters at the time when a few pious evangelical laymen* in London made a humble attempt to originate a revival.

The English nonconformists who retained their doctrinal orthodoxy, had greatly declined from the spirit of their ejected fathers. The Puritan fervour had become almost extinct. The earnest and zealous form of religion, which had brought upon that body the scoffing ridicule of the poets and wits of the licentious court of James the First, had gradually abated, till at length the fervid glow which animated the sermons and practical treatises of Richard Baxter, and breathed in the letters of Joseph Alleine, had nearly faded away. After the death, in 1751, of the seraphic Doddridge, who had contributed more than any other individual to keep alive the sacred fire in the nonconformist churches, that fire was almost buried beneath a heap of smouldering embers. There was, indeed, one of his own students, Richard Darracott, "the star of the west," who was both "a *burning* and a shining light," but he was speedily quenched in death; and, within twenty years after the removal of Doddridge to a higher and more congenial sphere, a cold and formal orthodoxy prevailed among the Independents. The ministry had too generally become inanimate and apathetic. The flame of ancient piety and apostolic zeal was nearly extinguished; "the love of many had waxed cold," and very few escaped that state of Laodicean lukewarmness, which the great Master has declared to be most offensive to his holy mind. He might therefore have addressed them in the words which form part of the message to that ancient church: "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten; be zealous, therefore, and repent."*

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* I use this as a common and convenient term, but protesting against it as popish in its origin, and as recognising and tending to maintain a distinction unscriptural in its nature, and injurious in its operation.

Were I asked to assign the chief cause of this woful state of spiritual declension, I should without hesitation ascribe it almost entirely to utter forgetfulness, on the part of our churches, of the first and great duty of Christian societies, to circulate the light of evangelical doctrine, and to diffuse the vital heat of evangelical love in all directions around, and to the remote regions beyond them. During the first ten or twelve years after the passing of the Toleration Act in 1689, upwards of a thousand meeting-houses were erected by Dissenters of the Presbyterian and Congregational denominations, (between which an union was shortly afterwards formed,) in all parts of England. But here the work stopped. They had provided for themselves and for their children, and were satisfied with what they had done. No attempts were made to originate new churches, to erect new chapels, or even to send out evangelists who might gather in converts from the perishing world around. Every separate church too much resembled "a garden enclosed," and its members manifested no disposition to break forth on the right hand and on the left, in order to reclaim and bring under cultivation a portion of the surrounding wilderness.

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* Rev. iii. 14—16, 19.

The consequence was only such as might have been expected. Having failed in their duty of being continually engaged in active and strenuous exertions for the benefit of others, they gradually sank themselves into a state of apathetic indifference. The children of the light and of the day slept as did the rest, and their sleep might have terminated in a fatal lethargic stupor, had not God stirred up a few individuals of eminent piety and devoted zeal, who labouring themselves like men in earnest, sought to awaken and arouse them.

The Methodists were raised up by his gracious providence as witnesses to the earnest and energetic character of real spiritual Christianity. Their voice to a slumbering church was, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." The intercourse between Whitefield and a few of the Congregational ministers had not been without happy effect, but the things that remained and were ready to die had not been effectually strengthened, when, in the year 1776, God put it into the heart of a few zealous, devoted members of Independent churches, and of other Christian communities, to combine together for the spiritual welfare of their perishing fellow-men.

To show that I do not misrepresent or exaggerate the actual condition of our churches about this time, I will refer to two competent witnesses in confirmation of my testimony.

Dr. Price, an English Presbyterian minister, in a sermon preached on the general fast, February 10, 1779, thus described the state of things:—"As to religion, nothing is plainer than that it was never at so low an ebb. Even among Protestant nonconformists, the places of worship are almost deserted. In this great metropolis, several of our best congregations have sunk to nothing. Many are sinking, and few flourish. Our religious zeal is dying, and the most valuable part of the dissenting interest is likely soon to be ground to death, between enthusiasm on the one hand, and luxury and fashion on the other." p. 28.*

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* I do not quite agree in the view taken by Dr. Price of the evils which were then threatening to destroy what he calls "the dissenting interest." One of these he designates 'enthusiasm,' referring, I presume, to the Methodists, a body distinguished for the very quality, "religious

In 1782, Dr. Savage, pastor of the Independent church in Berry street, printed a sermon preached at Dr. Gibbons's meeting-house in Haberdashers' Hall, February 20, entitled, 'National Reformation the way to prevent National Ruin;' the occasion of which was "the revival of a monthly religious exercise which used to circulate through the Congregational or Independent churches, from above forty years ago till the year 1763; when on the return of peace and opulence, at the close of a most successful war, dissipation and indifference to religion began generally to prevail; and the Dissenters did not escape the infection, so that the exercise dwindled, and was soon dropped for want of attendance."

The author draws a fearful picture of the state into which the nation, and even religious professors, had sunk. The following passage may serve as a specimen: "Avarice and extortion, open injustice, frauds and forgeries, pride and luxury, drunkenness and debauchery, the rage of gaming, profaneness, and blasphemy; in short, vice and immorality of every kind and degree, irreligion and impiety in every shape, are not only found among us, but abound in the midst of us. . . . . The corruption, both in principles and manners, is become very nearly universal,—'iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold;' the power of godliness almost disappears, religion languishes into

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zeal," which he truly says was dying among the regular Dissenters. Lukewarmness, leading to doctrinal error, and producing a worldly spirit, had been their great bane.

a mere name, and indifference and carnality prevail among its professors."[*]

It is thus apparent how greatly the English people at that time needed the plain, faithful, and earnest preaching of the Gospel, there being then a very small number of evangelical clergymen in the Established Church. Nothing, therefore, could be more seasonable, nothing, in fact, was more imperatively required, than the adoption of active measures for promoting the too long neglected work of home-evangelisation. I regard the formation of the Evangelical Society[†] in 1776 as an important era in the religious history of our country. It was a *first* step which led on to much greater things. It introduced the principle of *association* for the spread of the Gospel in the dark and neglected parts of the land,—a principle in perfect accordance with the spirit and genius of the Christian religion, and of which the orthodox nonconformists had too long neglected to avail themselves.

The honour of forming this society does not exclusively belong to Dissenters, although no small share may justly be claimed by them. I regret not having been able to obtain access to the first minute-book, but I have reason to believe that several of the founders were connected with Mr. Whitefield's and Lady Huntingdon's chapels in London, and it is known that one at least was a member of the Church of England.

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[*] pp. 1, 19.

[†] The title given to this Society was 'Societas Evangelica,' but I can perceive no reason for a Latin name having been adopted.

As my grandfather was chosen the first treasurer, it may reasonably be inferred that he took a very active part in its formation, as he certainly did in its subsequent proceedings. The first (gratuitous) secretary was Mr. Benjamin Mills, of Moorfields,* a hearer of the Rev. W. Romaine, who, I believe, retained the office till his death, in 1791.

The primary object of the Society was to extend the Gospel by means of itinerant preaching. Its funds were applied toward defraying the expenses incurred by ministers who might go forth to preach in their respective neighbourhoods. This plan was wisely contrived to encourage the more active and energetic pastors to extend their usefulness by penetrating into the dark villages and neglected rural hamlets around them, and to stimulate others to similar efforts.

But the spiritual condition of the Congregational ministry was far from being at that time generally satisfactory. Something was yet wanting in order to provide a race of pastors endued with the spirit of evangelists. It seemed to be a too prevalent opinion that the colleges were merely intended to supply a succession of pastors to the existing churches, who might feed them with knowledge and understanding of the word of God, and that such pastors were not called or required to go forth into the wilderness, to seek out and bring into the fold those who had gone astray, and were exposed to the most imminent peril of being lost for ever. Our ministers had too little sympathy with the good Shepherd, the great Pastor and Bishop of souls, who in the course of his circuit through all the cities and villages of Galilee, "when he saw the multitudes, was moved with compassion toward them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd," and thereupon took occasion to call for the prayers of his disciples that the small number of labourers in the spiritual harvest might be greatly increased.*

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* Father of Samuel Mills, Esq., of Russell Square. The late Rev. George Burder thus writes,—"Early in the year 1776, the Evangelical Society was established, of which I became a subscriber and director; and found my heart much engaged in the object of it."—Memoir, p. 23. The Rev. Rowland Hill also assisted in forming the Society.

As preaching stations were multiplied, and chapels erected, or rooms fitted up in towns and villages previously destitute of an evangelical ministry, the necessity was felt for providing suitable men without delay to supply the urgent lack of labourers. The state of the ministry among the Independents, and of their colleges, was not, at that time, such as to encourage zealous and devoted young men to undertake the course of study prescribed in them, as an introduction to pastoral engagements. The late Rev. George Burder, speaking of his entrance into the ministry without passing through a Dissenting academy, says: "I was at this time (A. D. 1777) scarcely determined whether to take my lot with the Dissenters or not. I had found abundantly more of the power of God with the evangelical clergymen, and with the Calvinistic Methodists; besides which, the formality, stiffness, and apparent pride and self-importance, that I saw, or thought I saw, among some of the academicians, disgusted me."*

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* Matthew ix. 35—38.

His father, Mr. Henry Burder, a deacon of the Congregational church meeting in Fetter-lane, who at first opposed his entering into the ministry in what was then accounted an irregular manner, thus wrote to him in May 1778, "Do not the churches in our day need a fire to 'purge the floor?' Do we not need something to rouse up our sleeping souls? . . . . I verily believe, at least I greatly fear, that almost all our churches, and by very far the greatest part of professed believers, ministers not excepted, are very far gone into a Laodicean spirit. Oh for a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord! . . . . . May the Lord hasten it in his time!"†

The same letter, and another written some months after, contain passages which furnish minute and interesting details concerning the foundation of the academy established to provide labourers for the extending and ripening spiritual harvest.

May 22, 1778.—"Mr. Welch ‡ and myself have met Mr. Wilson and several ministers and others to consider of establishing an English Academy, wherein we propose the instructing of proper persons in the English grammar, in divinity, and in the best method of composing sermons. Eleven articles have been agreed to, a tutor and treasurer chosen, and we are to meet again next Tuesday week to pursue our plan.

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* Memoir of Rev. George Burder, by Dr. Henry F. Burder, 1833, p. 35.

† Ibid. pp. 57, 58.

‡ George Welch, Esq., a banker, the leading partner in the firm of Welch, Rogers, and Co. founder of the Academy at Gosport.—See Dr. Bennett's Memoirs of Rev. Dr. Bogue, 1827, p. 119.

Dec. 26, 1778.—" There is a new society united, under the appellation of the New English Academy. Your worthy friend Mr. Wilson, of Wood street, is chosen treasurer. Mr. Wilson and Mr. Welch, the Rev. Messrs. Barber and Brewer, and one or two more, with myself, were the first projectors of this (I hope, very extensively useful) design. The two divines mentioned are the tutors. The plan is this: Persons wishing to be admitted must be recommended by one of the society, or must bring written testimonies from the pastor or deacons of the church to which they belong. They are also to give in an account of their faith, experience, and reasons for going into the ministry. They are to be examined by a committee appointed by the society, before whom they are to engage in prayer, and to give a specimen of their abilities; and if approved, they are to be admitted as students, to continue under instruction not more than two years, and not to preach in less than one year from the time of admission, unless the tutors think proper. They are to be instructed in English grammar, and in a course of divinity, and to be assisted in understanding some of the more difficult parts of Scripture, and in the best methods of studying for the pulpit. We meet with much encouragement; several respectable persons, both Dissenters and Methodists, have joined us, and several have subscribed five guineas per year.* I think our subscriptions

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* I need scarcely mention that my grandfather was one of those. It appears, also, that he was an annual subscriber to the following Academies.

King's Head Society	£2	2	0
Lady Huntingdon's College	2	2	0
Newport Pagnell Academy. . . .	2	2	0

amount to nearly or quite £150 a-year; but though we have had so much encouragement and unanimity, we are not without those that snarl at us, and start objections and difficulties; but I hope it will please God to smile on this design, and make it the happy means of spreading the light of the knowledge of the glory of Christ, and of gathering in his elect."—pp. 57, 72, 73.

Some additional particulars are derived from "An Account of the Hoxton Academy," printed in 1804, which is thus introduced:—

"This Academy, for preparing young men for the exercise of the Christian ministry, was instituted in the month of October, 1778. The persons who were principally active in its formation were the late Thomas Wilson, Esq., of Highbury place (Treasurer), and the late Benjamin Mills, Esq. of Moorfields (Secretary). With these gentlemen were associated the Rev. Messrs. Barber and Brewer (Tutors), Rev. Messrs. Clayton, Rogers, Towers, Trotman, James Webb, &c., together with Messrs. Keen, West, &c.* At that time the plan of the Academy was limited to the instruction of persons of talents and piety, resident in London only, who attended lectures on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday in every week. In cases which rendered it necessary, the students were supported partly by the Society and partly by their own occupations."

From a MS. memorandum, in reference to the "Origin of Highbury College," written in 1828 by the late Rev. George Burder, with which I have been favoured by his son, Dr. Henry Burder, it appears (as already intimated) that this Academy was founded chiefly to supply the urgent spiritual necessities of villages, and other destitute places in the country, on account of the extreme improbability of their being provided with evangelical instruction from any other source.* He represents that the plan was first projected by a few private members of churches. That my venerated grandfather, who was certainly one of the first originators of it, took a very active and leading part in the measures adopted for carrying the project into practical execution, is evident from the fact mentioned by Mr. Burder, that, at his request, and in one of the parlours of his house in Wood street, he (Mr. B.) drew up a brief hand-bill containing the first printed announcement of the plan to be laid before a meeting, called for an early subsequent day. At this meeting, held October 9, 1778, the plan was approved and adopted.

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* Robert Keen, Esq., a friend and correspondent of Whitefield, and Daniel West, Esq. of Spitalfields, managers of the Tabernacle. To these may be added Mr. Dupont, who then kept the Castle and Falcon Inn in Aldersgate-street, Mr. Hodgkinson, and Mr. George Durant.

Mr. Benjamin Mills was chosen the first secretary, which office he continued to hold till December, 1785.†

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* This is confirmed by the first entry in the original minute book, "Remarkable is that ancient prophecy, Dan. xii. 4, 'Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.' It is with pleasure some friends of religion have observed a considerable fulfilment of the prophecy in our day: for by the occasional labours of Gospel-preachers in many parts of the kingdom, numbers of people have been stirred up to unite in their endeavours to obtain a preached Gospel in those parts where ignorance and error have for a long time prevailed. The wants of such congregations are with difficulty supplied."

† He appears to have been the first benefactor to the Library. July 9, 1779, a resolution was passed, that the thanks of the Society be given to Mr. Benjamin Mills for £20 presented by him, to be laid out in books,

In December, 1779, the Rev. John Kello, of Bethnal Green, was added to the two tutors—Messrs. Barber and Brewer. Lectures were delivered at a room in Gracechurch street, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, by Mr. Brewer, on Preaching; Mr. Barber, on Divinity; Mr. Kello, on Grammar and Logic. These lectures usually occupied from 10 o'clock A.M. until 2 P.M.

February 18, 1782, the following resolution was passed, "That the thanks of the Society be given to the Treasurer, for the faithful and generous discharge of his office." January 10, 1783, it was resolved, "That the thanks of the Society be given to the Treasurer, for his kind attention and regard to the interests and concerns of the Society."

I have inserted these resolutions as tending to confirm what I have reason to believe was the fact, that my grandfather, besides faithfully discharging the duties of his office as treasurer, rendered important and valuable services of a more general nature.

In tracing the origin of this institution it may be said, "Who hath despised the day of small things?" but although "its beginning was small, its latter end has greatly increased." No one, during its infancy, would have ventured to predict what would be its mature growth; but the prophetic impulse was not required to foresee that a plan, framed to meet an

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as an addition to the library for the use of the students. Feb. 10, 1786, the thanks of the Society were voted to Mr. Mills for his kind services as Secretary, in which office he had been urgently requested to continue.

urgent exigency, and adapted to the peculiar circumstances of the times then present, was not, in its original form, destined for perpetuity. It continued, in fact, only four years. Experience having proved this plan to be ineffectual for the purpose of obtaining a regular succession of students, and for imparting to them a competent degree of instruction and fitness for their work, the Society resolved, in the month of November, 1782, that in future daily lectures should be given, and that the students should devote their whole time to their studies, be placed under the immediate direction and superintendence of one tutor, and receive a more liberal education than had previously been given.

In January, 1783, the Grove-house, Mile End, was taken, and the Rev. Stephen Addington, pastor of the Congregational church in Miles's-lane, who had been a student under Dr. Doddridge, became the sole tutor of what now assumed the name of the Evangelical Academy. Mr. A. soon after became D.D. The declining state of his health compelled him to resign the office of tutor in November, 1790; but he kindly continued his services till a successor could be appointed.

In March, 1791, the committee obtained from the trustees of William Coward, Esq., an assignment for the few remaining years of the term, of a lease held by them from the trustees of Dr. Daniel Williams, of a large house in Hoxton, in which the Academy founded by Mr. Coward had been kept for many years,* to which the rising institution was removed, and the Rev. Robert Simpson, of Bolton, in Lancashire, who had previously been appointed the tutor, entered upon his duties at Lady-day.†

In March, 1793, my grandfather and two other gentlemen were appointed a committee to negociate with the trustees of Dr. Williams for a new lease of the house at Hoxton, which was granted on liberal terms, and the premises were put into substantial repair. The same gentlemen were requested to act as a committee to procure subscriptions for defraying the expenses incurred. This was probably one of the last services rendered by him while actively engaged in the work of the Lord, previously to his being dismissed from the field of labour to his heavenly rest.

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* This, I have no doubt, was the house occupied by Dr. Williams. In his will he described himself "of Hoxton, near London." That place was then a rural hamlet, and the house had a large garden attached to it.

† The late Dr. Edward Williams, of Rotherham, then Mr. W. of Oswestry, who had for several years filled the situation of tutor in the Academy at that place, supported by the Congregational Fund, "received an invitation through the medium of the Rev. R. Hill to succeed Dr. Addington at the Mile End Academy." Memoir of Dr. Williams, by Joseph Gilbert, 1825, p. 319. From the Minutes it appears that Mr. Simpson was elected tutor at a special general meeting, held Dec. 21, 1790.

CHAPTER IV.

MY FATHER'S BIRTH, EDUCATION, AND APPRENTICESHIP.

THOMAS WILSON was born November 11th, 1764, in a house situate at the corner of Goldsmith street—being No. 124, Wood street, Cheapside, in the city of London, to which place his parents had some years before removed from Aldermanbury.* He was baptized by Dr. Gibbons, December 2nd, following.

He was the seventh child of Thomas and Mary Wilson, who have already been introduced to the reader. Most of the children born to his parents previously, had been from their birth and for some time afterward, healthy and thriving infants, but either died suddenly, or after a short illness.† He was from the

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* The premises, which were large and extensive, were taken down in 1840, and a new warehouse built on the site.

† The following is a list of the names and dates of birth of those who had been born previously, most, if not all of whom had died before his birth :—

Thomas	born	Aug. 18, 1756.
John Remington	„	July 22, 1757.
Thomas	„	May 22, 1759.
Elizabeth	„	Sept. 8, 1760.
John Remington	„	July 20, 1762.
Joseph	„	Nov. 16, 1763.

first a delicate and sickly child—a circumstance which, as it excited the fears and apprehensions of his parents, naturally led them to adopt all measures of precaution to cherish and sustain the tender plant. Feeling that as they had lost several strong healthy children, they could scarcely hope to preserve a feeble and ailing one, if they attempted to rear him at their own residence, in a close street, in the centre of a large and crowded city, they hired a lodging at Hampstead for him and his nurse, during the summer months. He has often been heard in later life to speak of a trifling circumstance which occurred at this place when he was about three years old. So invigorating an effect had the pure fresh air produced upon him in a short time, that his mother, on going to see him, was surprised and delighted to find him on the Heath filling a little cart with sand and stones. When he was a child he spoke, felt, and acted as a child; but long after he had become a man, and had put away childish things, he retained a vivid recollection of this simple act, which would seem to have impressed itself on his imagination as having awakened in him, for the first time, the consciousness of active power, and excited that sense of pleasure which our infant nature derives from producing some visible change and sensible effect. Although there is nothing remarkable in this circumstance, I mention it because my father appeared to regard it as the earliest indication of that delight in action for which he was distinguished, and which afterward led to the production of effects of a much higher nature.

It was, I may safely assert, a great point of duty with his parents, while he remained under the paternal roof and was the subject of domestic training, to form and mould his young and tender mind to moral virtue and Christian piety. They deeply felt the weight of that solemn obligation under which they were laid, to train up their children in the way in which they should walk —trusting to the gracious promise of God, that when old they should not depart therefrom. They sought, by all suitable means,—by wholesome discipline, and mild restraint, by precept and instruction drawn from the Holy Scriptures, and especially by the more eloquent and effectual teaching of a virtuous and holy example,—to "train him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

The literary advantages enjoyed by my father in early life were not of a superior kind. He was sent—at what age I am not able to state—to a boarding-school at Newington green,* which had been commenced in 1747 by Mr. James Burgh, and carried on with great reputation and success. Mr. Burgh retired from the school in 1771, and was succeeded by Mr. Cockburn, under whom, I have reason to believe, it had, in some measure, degenerated, although at the time my father and his younger brother* were scholars, the number of pupils amounted to about seventy. One of his schoolfellows was Samuel Rogers, the future elegant and accomplished poet. Mr. Cockburn used often to say that Samuel Rogers and Thomas Wilson were the best boys in the school.

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* This place was the seat of two of the earliest academies established for the benefit of Protestant Dissenters; one kept by the learned Theophilus Gale, the other by "that polite and profound scholar" Mr. Charles Morton. The latter educated "some scores of young ministers, as well as many other good scholars." Daniel De Foe was one of his pupils.

My father was a quiet, sober, and thoughtful boy, not addicted to youthful sports, but fond of retirement, and more disposed to read than to play. On the winter evenings, when lights were brought in and placed in different parts of the school-room, and the boys, according to their different tastes, gathered in groups around them, his chosen place was near the books, and he was a diligent reader of substantial authors. One of the books which he read through while at school, was Rollin's Ancient History. In January, 1777, it appears that he began to learn book-keeping according to the then approved method. The waste-book, journal, and ledger, written by him in a beautiful hand, yet remain as proofs of his diligent attention and skilful execution.

The school at Newington green was probably, at the time my father was there, rather a commercial than a classical school. I do not recollect ever asking him whether he received any instruction in the Latin and Greek languages, but of the former his knowledge was extremely limited. The only portion of Latin I ever heard him repeat was the invocation of the Lord's Prayer,—"Pater noster qui es in cœlo." Of Greek, I believe he was entirely ignorant, and I cannot suppose that he had ever learned even the alphabet of that noble language.

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* Joseph Wilson, Esq., of Highbury hill, Islington, to whom I am indebted for information concerning my grandfather, and my father's school-boy days.

Whatever advantages may be derivable from an early acquaintance with the classical writers of Greece and Rome, my father certainly obtained none of them; but I am disposed to think that the loss he sustained was very trifling. I have sometimes been led to consider that his abhorrence of war in future life might be ascribed in part to his happy ignorance of the destructive exploits and murderous achievements of the heroes of the Iliad, those "tremendous fighting animals"*—especially the fierce rage and ferocious courage of that stern destroyer, the dire Achilles, whom, in utter defiance of the gentle, benign, forgiving, merciful spirit of the Christian religion, too many youthful readers are taught to admire, and almost to adore. He might also be indebted, in part, for the purity of his youthful imagination, to his yet more happy ignorance of the licentious and abominable deeds ascribed to the heathen gods and goddesses. If nothing can be more important than to preserve untainted the native delicacy of the youthful mind, nothing surely can be more injurious than to initiate boys at a tender age into all the mysteries of the ancient heathen mythology, and to acquaint them with the absurdities and impurities of the Pantheon. He might indeed, in future life, labour under some disadvantages in consequence of his unclassical education; but any such disadvantages were amply compensated. If those justly admired models did not refine his taste, and stimulate his youthful fancy by their beautiful descriptions of natural objects and scenery—if they did not correct and polish his style by their finished specimens of composition, and replenish his memory with their ample store of moral maxims—a greater predominance of imagination, a more close attention to the graces and elegances of diction and writing, might only have diverted him in subsequent years from his great practical business. Nor did he sustain any serious loss from unacquaintance with the moral codes and aphoristic precepts of the heathen philosophers and poets, since he had known from a child those holy Scriptures which were not only able to make him wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus, but are also profitable for all the purposes of moral instruction and practical wisdom, as well as for reproof and correction, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

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* See Foster's Essays, 12mo. edition, 1838, pp. 261—270.

If Christian parents think it right, or find it necessary, to send their children from the paternal roof, and entrust them to the care of those who keep boarding schools, surely it is their imperative duty to inquire and ascertain what examples are to be presented to them, what lessons to be inculcated upon them in the books which they daily read and study, and to satisfy themselves that those examples and lessons are consistent with the tone and spirit of the Christian code of morals contained in the New Testament.

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* 2 Tim. iii. 15—17.

At the age of fourteen, (1778,) he was bound an apprentice to his father, his aunt, and his first cousin, Mr. John Wilson. Of this important period of his life very slight records remain.

Some time after his apprenticeship commenced, Mr. Joseph Lomas, an intimate friend of my grandfather, being a fellow deacon of the same church, an intelligent man, who had a taste for literature, suggested to him that it would be desirable some additional means should be taken for the mental improvement of my father and his younger brother, then also an apprentice. He recommended Mr. Daniel Noble, a General Baptist minister, as a suitable person to be employed for this purpose. My grandfather wisely and kindly concurred in this proposal, and Mr. Noble undertook to attend twice a week for two or three hours, to hear them read approved authors, and give them instruction in history, geography, and other branches of useful knowledge.

Some brief and hastily-penned notes remain of a little tour in Kent, which my father made in the third year of his apprenticeship, partly on business, and partly for recreation, with Mr. Surgey, a pious man, who was employed as a traveller for the firm. I will make a few extracts for the purpose of showing his early habit of observation, admiration of beautiful scenery, and disposition to associate and to feel himself at home in the company of pious persons, especially ministers of the Gospel.

They set out on horseback, September 5th, 1780. At the Warren, Woolwich, he expresses "much surprise" at the mighty instruments framed by human ingenuity for the destruction of the species,—cannon-balls, grape shot, &c. there accumulated in immense quantity.

"At Gravesend, Mr. Beck,* the minister, supped and spent the evening with us.

"September 6. Set off for Chatham (about nine miles,) through Strood and Rochester, which was busy with the election,—went round the Dock-yard—went on board the Blenheim of ninety guns—saw a seventy-four gun ship in the river ready to join the grand fleet—gun-boats [their construction and use described]—Mr. Harrison, the minister at Chatham, supped with us.

"September 7. On our road towards Milton, had a fine prospect of the Thames on one side, and hills on the other, covered with hops, orchards with great quantity of fruit.

"September 8. A very pleasant ride to Dover.

"September 9. Very fine prospect of the cliffs of France. The castle they would not let us see. At Deal, Mr. Fenn, whose house is a little way from the town, kindly lodged us, the inn being full.

"Sabbath-day. In the morning, Mr. Fenn went to preach at Dover, and there was no preaching at his meeting. We went in the morning to the Presbyterians', in the afternoon to Mr. Fenn's meeting: spent the day very agreeably.

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* The late Rev. Thomas Beck, afterwards of Berry Street.

"Thursday (September 14.) In the evening, heard Mr. Perronet,* at his chapel, Canterbury.

"Friday. Breakfasted with Mr. Perronet; he went with me to the cathedral, [of which no admiration is expressed.] In the afternoon went to Hern, six miles, and in our way back, called on Mr. Kingsford, the minister.

"Saturday. At Lenham, we lodged at Mr. Gooddy's, a very serious man.

"Sabbath-day. Went on horseback with Mr. Gooddy and Mr. Whiney, who is the minister of the place, to Edgerton, about four miles off. He preached in a large room to a good many people. After sermon, we all rode back to Lenham; went in the afternoon to the meeting there, which is newly built—heard Mr. Whiney upon Christ being the surety of his people. Mr. Gooddy keeps his house open on a Sabbath-day for the people that come from the neighbouring towns. As it was a wet morning, there were only fifteen or sixteen that drank tea together."†

The only other fragment remaining of this period of his life is a letter from the Rev. Timothy Priestley, (brother of the celebrated Dr. Priestley,) a Dissenting minister, with whom my father had formed an acquaintance. It is dated Dublin, February 12, 1786, and thus commences:—

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* Mr. Edward Perronet. See Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii. p. 134.

† He mentions that the china tea service, which had been presented to Mr. G., bore the following inscriptions:—on the tea-cups and saucers, "Love as brethren;" on the sugar-basin, "See how these Christians love;" on the tea-pot, "And all that believed were together, and had all things common." This would probably be an impressive lesson to a youthful mind on the duty of Christian love and union.

"My dear Friend,

"I am much indebted to you, and hope I shall not for many days to come forget your request for my remembrance of you at the throne of grace; and I hope God will not only keep you from the evils of the time, but make you eminent in his glorious cause, which is the highest rational happiness we can enjoy on this side heaven. There is more real pleasure in one hour's communion with God, than all that the earth can afford, from this moment to its dissolution. I wonder not at David—*a day in thy courts!* Those are indeed in the way to comfort here, whom God takes by the hand and leads to his throne. You mention business,—be much in prayer, and you will stand in any station. Beware of looking upon prayer merely as a duty. What a privilege would some think it to have free access at all times to the king! How little do we see of the astonishing condescension of God, and what a mercy to be among those to whom God grants so singular a favour to have eyes to see it at an early period of life! * * *

"Yours affectionately,

"TIM. PRIESTLEY."

It is impossible that we should know in this world how much we are indebted to the prayers of pious relatives and Christian friends; but if "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much," we may reasonably suppose that Mr. Priestley's remembrance of my father in his intercessions before God might contribute materially to the future fulfilment of one wish expressed on his behalf, that "God will make you eminent in his glorious cause."

I have no means of ascertaining the time and circumstances of my father's first introduction into the household of faith, first access into that state of grace, in which for many years he stood, upheld by the same mighty power which guided his feet into the way of peace. He was not accustomed to refer particularly to his own religious experience, nor have I ever heard him mention the season or the means of his conversion to God. There is reason, however, to believe that his mind was gradually impressed with the supreme value and paramount importance of eternal realities. Referring to his early life, in 1808, he thus expressed himself:—"I have great reason to be thankful for kind and pious parents, and especially for a gradual love which I have felt for Divine things."

It is extremely probable that he could not have mentioned any particular time at which his mind experienced the great change, being one of those children of pious parents who fear the Lord from their early youth, and are regenerated by the Holy Spirit, without being conscious at the time of the mighty effect produced within them by his gracious operation.

He was preserved from much evil—"saved from a thousand snares," by giving his heart to God at an early period of life; and I have reason to believe that in future years he was deeply sensible of the special advantages he enjoyed at this time. It was certainly a great privilege, for which, I doubt not, he was devoutly thankful, that, at a critical period of life, in the midst of a large and wicked city, he was under the watchful eye and tender care of pious and affectionate parents, and not exposed to strong temptations, like many other youths, left to themselves, without wholesome restraint, or friendly counsel and remonstrance. He was thus preserved from the contaminating influence of corrupt associations, and had constantly before his eyes the holy example of his parents, and of other pious individuals, with whom he was in the habit of frequent intercourse. As a young man he "cleansed his way by taking heed thereto, according to the word of God," and thus "escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

Toward the close of 1785 my father was admitted into partnership with his father and cousin, and became, to adopt the description given in the partnership deeds, (dated Dec. 26th,) "a silkman," that is, according to the explanation annexed, "a person engaged in the trade and business of manufacturing and selling ribbons and gauzes." From this date to the year 1790, my materials for biographical notice are very scanty; I must, therefore content myself with a few general remarks.

It may be thought strange that my father did not join one of the Congregational churches in London, and thus formally connect himself with the regular orthodox Dissenters, as my grandfather had done many years before. I am not able positively to assign the reasons which induced him to decline doing this, but the following circumstances may be mentioned as explanatory.

A considerable portion of his apprenticeship had been spent in Coventry, where a branch of the business was carried on. While at that place he attended at the chapel in West Orchard, of which my grandfather had been one of the founders. The late Mr. Matthew Wilks had, previously to May, 1783, frequently visited Coventry and supplied that congregation, by whom he was invited to become their minister.* My father frequently heard him there, and admired his evangelical strain of preaching, and his striking, powerful, and impressive mode of address. This would naturally lead him afterwards to hear that eminent man when he regularly officiated at the Tabernacle in London. The minister chosen at Haberdashers' Hall to succeed Dr. Gibbons, who died in the year 1785, was not a popular or attractive preacher, so that there was no powerful inducement for him regularly to frequent that place; and having been accustomed to attend at the Tabernacle on the Lord's-day evenings, and also some of the week-evening services, he had heard all the preachers who supplied there, and preferred their warm, lively, affectionate manner, to the more correct, perhaps, but colder and less earnest style of the regular London pastors. He had also formed acquaintance and contracted friendship with some of the ministers who were annual supplies at the Tabernacle, and under these circumstances it was natural that he should feel a superior attraction to that place, and become a regular attendant there. He joined in communion with the Tabernacle society, I believe, shortly after his apprenticeship expired, but in what year I have not been able to ascertain.

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* Memoir of Rev. George Burder, p. 119.

Let not the reader be startled or shocked to hear that my father was one of "the children of the Tabernacle." I adopt an expression employed by the late Rev. Sidney Smith, who in the years 1808-9, published some articles on Methodism and missions in the Edinburgh Review, in which, although himself professedly a Christian minister, he set at defiance all the rules of Christian charity, all the principles of Christian morality, and all the specific injunctions of the Christian Scriptures, especially that solemn admonition to be enforced upon others by persons of his profession,—to "speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men." This 'reverend calumniator,' not knowing what he says nor whereof he affirms, but speaking evil of the things that he understood not, raves concerning "the nonsense, the melancholy, and the madness of the Tabernacle," calling the evangelical party, or the Methodists,—for he blends all together in one undistinguished mass,—"a trumpery sect and faction, impious coxcombs, canting hypocrites, raving enthusiasts, drivelling fools, madmen, and maniacs." That a reputed minister of the Christian religion, a dignitary of a church which has an orthodox creed and an evangelical liturgy, should condescend to employ such coarse language, and apply such abusive terms to any professedly religious body of men not flagrantly wicked or notoriously insane, is a sufficient offence both against taste and morals; but that he should thus attempt to vilify a class of men who were resolved by the grace of God to "live godly in Christ Jesus,"—to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints,"—to come out from the world and be separate, careful not to touch the unclean thing, and striving to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things, is worthy of a man who rejects the scriptural distinction between the church and the world, the godly and the ungodly, and affirms, in express contradiction to our blessed Lord and his beloved disciple,*—"it is not true that the world hates piety."†

Virulent invective, indiscriminate censure, senseless calumny, deserve no serious answer or formal refutation; but were these imputations worthy of grave notice, we need only appeal for a practical contradiction of them, to the lives and actions of the parties thus shamelessly reviled. Our Lord's own test may be safely applied—"By their fruits ye shall know them." Not a few members of this calumniated society might be mentioned who have been "the epistles of Christ known and read of all men," and the noble career of active beneficence about to be described would practically give the lie to a thousand similar charges brought against them by agents and allies of "the accuser of the brethren." "So is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." This writer, and others of the same calumnious tribe, might adopt the language of an apocryphal author—"This was he whom we had sometimes in derision and a proverb of reproach. We fools accounted his life madness, and his end to be without honour. How is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot is among the saints."*

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* John vii. 7; xv. 18, 19. 1 John iii. 10—13.

† It is deeply to be regretted that Mr. Smith retained this youthful effusion in his mature and sober age, by giving it a place in the collection of his reviews, published in 1839. The charity which hopeth all things can only cherish the hope, that before his departure hence, God gave him repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth,—that truth which is after godliness.

My father was uniformly attentive and assiduous in discharging the duties of the worldly calling in which Divine Providence had placed him, and therein he "abode with God." While diligent in business, he did not devote the whole of his time to his own secular interests, but reserved a portion of it for God and his cause; he did not act as if the one great end, the sole object of life was to "buy and sell and get gain;" he did not resign himself to the absorbing and engrossing occupations of "the life that now is." He knew too well that "a man's life," properly so called, "consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth." He was not one of those who are determined at all hazards to be rich, who "fall into temptation and a snare, and too often pierce themselves through with many sorrows."

It was a great advantage to my father that, having been trained up in the right way, and being disposed by the grace of God to walk therein, he entered early upon a course of well-doing, and was led to begin right and to give liberally at his first setting out in life. Nothing can be of greater importance to a religious tradesman, especially in perilous times like those which are now passing over us, than to form and strengthen by frequent exercise the invaluable habit of liberal distribution, which is the great antagonist force to that selfishness which the spirit of trade, when thoroughly imbibed, strongly tends to generate and cherish. He cannot consult his own moral safety and spiritual interest better than by acting literally upon the apostle's advice to the members of the church at Corinth:* "Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him." Thus would he "consecrate his *gain* unto the Lord, and his substance unto the Lord of the whole earth," and practically obey that admonition of the wise man,—" Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase."

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* Wisdom of Solomon, v. 3—5. I might, instead of the word 'calumnious,' have used the term 'diabolical,' employing it in the frequent sense of the Greek noun from which it is derived,—a false accuser, a slanderer, (1 Tim. iii. 11. 2 Tim. iii. 3. Titus ii. 3.)

I have no reason to doubt that my father, while a trader, "gave as God prospered him;" but not having the means of ascertaining that such was the fact, I may be permitted to present to the reader the example of another excellent man, the late Mr. John Dickinson, of Birmingham, who, " when in business, regularly devoted *a tenth of his income* to the cause of the Redeemer. . . . . Like his friend Mr. Glover, he did not wait till he became rich before he became liberal, but commenced his career of liberality as soon as he commenced business."[*]

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* 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

No position is more critical than that of a young man entering upon business and beginning to acquire property. If he does not narrowly watch and jealously guard against the influences and tendencies which are then operating upon him, they may gain the ascendency and become predominant in spite of his better feelings, perhaps even of his sincere intentions. Man is a creature subject almost mechanically to certain laws, and no law is of greater force, and operates with greater certainty, than the law of habit; but it is impossible to come under the power of two opposite habits at the same time. If a man suffer the habit of acquisition to predominate and prevail over him,—as it must predominate and prevail unless carefully held in check and resolutely counteracted,—he may become, before he is aware, a miserable victim of "the pitiful passion for accumulation." Hence the immense importance of early forming and diligently cultivating the habit of liberality, of beginning to give as soon as a man begins to get, and increasing the amount of his givings in proportion to the increase of his gains. One of the greatest deceptions which men are too apt to practise upon themselves, is—to defer being bountiful till their means have greatly increased. This is indeed a striking proof of what our Lord calls "the deceitfulness of riches."[†]

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[*] Sermon on the lamented death of John Dickinson, Gent., preached in Ebenezer Chapel, Birmingham, Sept. 30, 1831, by T. East, p. 42.

[†] Matthew xiii. 22.

There is much sound sense and Christian philosophy in the homely rhymes of George Herbert,

> "Yet in thy thriving, still misdoubt some evil,
> Least gaining gain on thee, and make thee dim
> To all things else. Wealth is the conjurer's devil,
> Whom when he thinks he hath, the devil hath him.
> Gold thou mayst safely touch, but if it stick
> Unto thy hands, it woundeth to the quick."*

If a young and thriving tradesman do not consecrate his increase unto the Lord, he may expect to gain nothing but "harm and loss," base and filthy lucre, which will prove his bane and poison. His position is one full of danger, and it becomes him diligently to consider who hath said, "No man can serve two masters—Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Neutrality is impossible, and he must choose, and choose speedily, whether of these two he will serve. If he does not resolve, in the strength of Divine grace, vigorously to resist what may be called the tradesman's peculiar temptation to "lay up for himself treasures upon earth," under the specious pretence of providing for his family, he will, in all probability, become, in process of time, one of the votaries of mammon.

That my father was conscientiously watchful against the eager grasping spirit of trade, and habitually mindful of the uncertainty and unsatisfying nature of riches, will appear from the following sentences written by him at the commencement of a private account book in the form of a ledger, begun in the year 1790:—

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* The Temple, 9th Edition, 1667, p. 6.

“ Prov. xxviii. 20, 22. He that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent.”

“ He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye.”

“ Deut. viii. 18. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth.”

“ If rich, be not too joyful in having, too solicitous in keeping, too anxious in increasing, nor too sorrowful in losing.”

“ No man hath worldly things without their wings.”

“ The first concern is to lay up treasure in heaven.”

The same sentences he copied into another account-book begun in 1794.

CHAPTER V.

HIS MARRIAGE.—EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS ILLUSTRATIVE OF HIS PRIVATE AND DOMESTIC CHARACTER.

The year 1790 was a memorable and important year to my honoured father, as during it he was led, under the guidance of Divine Providence, to take those preliminary steps which issued in his marriage.

There is no circumstance of life in which men generally act with more rashness and precipitation, although there is not one more demanding prudent caution and deliberate consideration. My father was too deeply sensible of the importance of so intimate a connexion, to act without the exercise of sober judgment and sound discretion. He deliberated long, sought counsel of God by earnest prayer, consulted his nearest relatives, and determined to wait till he could discern the hand of the same gracious Providence which had hitherto guided his steps, clearly pointing out the path of duty. He was mindful, as he had been in previous years, of that command with a promise annexed, " In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." He sought as a companion for life one who feared God, of whose real piety he could have no doubt, and who would be a true helpmeet for him in the Divine life; one whose views and dispositions were similar to his own, and who (to use his own words) "had no taste for the company, fashions, or amusements of this vain world."

Many of the letters written by him to my mother before marriage have been preserved, and as they supply valuable materials illustrative of his character, I do not feel at liberty to withhold from the reader such portions of them as may contribute to that result. The letters themselves are altogether highly honourable to my father, both as a man and a Christian. While they contain not a line that is extravagant or indicative of foolish fondness, they manifest much warmth of feeling, great strength and ardour of attachment. At the same time there is an air of manly dignity pervading them. He evidently wrote like one conscious of the integrity of his own conduct, the sincerity and purity of his own motives. There is a transparent candour and simplicity about them. They contain the spontaneous outpouring of the heart, the frank avowal of his own tastes and feelings, habits and dispositions, without the least attempt at concealment or appearance of disguise.

" Oct. 25, 1790. Through the kind care and protection of the great Disposer of all events, whose love is unbounded, and power infinite, I arrived safe at Highbury. Since I came home I have been led to reflect on the gracious dealings of God to me through my past life, and must acknowledge that goodness and mercy have followed me all my days. May my future life show forth his praise! Particularly have I reason to bless God that he has deeply at times, especially under the word preached, convinced me of the importance of divine things, and of the worth of my soul; so that this world and all that it calls good or great has, at least for a time, appeared to be less than nothing and vanity. And though I find my heart deceitful and wicked, so that I have reason to abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes, yet I think I can say with truth, that I love the ways of true piety and the company of good people, by whatsoever name they may be called, and that it is my desire to love God with all my heart, and soul, and strength.

"I trust yesterday was a day of rest to my soul. After hearing Mr. Knight in the morning, I again renewed my covenant to be the Lord's at the sacrament. In the afternoon heard a most excellent sermon from Mr. Clayton [Rev. John Clayton, minister of the Weigh-house Chapel], from these words,—'What think ye of Christ?' I hope it increased my love to this adorable Saviour who is mighty to save."

"Nov. 2, 1790. I know you will join me in acknowledging that whatever is good in us is entirely owing to the grace of God. I have been desiring and aiming after diligence in business, and fervency in spirit, serving the Lord. How difficult this, and without Divine assistance, altogether impossible! Of course, having this in my view through life, there has been no time or opportunity, as well as, I trust, no desire for company, or what the world is pleased to call fashion. * * * I trust you will always find me possessed of integrity and benevolence, and seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. If we have Christ for our portion, we have everything that is good for us in him. I want to be every day more and more convinced of the inestimable worth of the great Redeemer.

"The Divine goodness has remarkably appeared hitherto, and I trust will appear."

"Nov. 19, 1790. Some solemn events are to take place in a few days in London. Poor Fonton is to be executed next Wednesday. I trust, from what I have heard, there is some *shadow of hope* as to his eternal state. The two incendiaries are to be executed on Saturday, at the spot where they perpetrated the horrid crime. What a dreadful evil is sin, and how true is it that the wages of sin is death! Let each of us triumph in our great deliverer, Jesus, who saves us from sin, death, and hell, and who invites us to the Gospel feast. I trust we shall both be permitted to taste the blessed provision at the Lord's table on the ensuing Sabbath. Says one, 'He here goes about as it were from soul to soul, and says, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? what is thy petition, and what is thy request? and it shall be granted. Dost thou want pardon? Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee. Dost thou want peace? Peace I leave with thee, my peace I give unto thee. Dost thou want direction in difficulty, success against temptations, support under trials, assistance in duties, growth in grace, the comforts of the Holy Ghost?—Ask what thou wilt, and it shall be done unto thee. What a blessed feast is this! Come, my fellow-Christians, let us improve this golden opportunity; let us pour out our hearts before him; pour our griefs into his bosom, and make our requests known unto him.'"

"Nov. 27. May the blessing of God attend us in all our movements, till at length we reach endless glory through Him that hath loved us!"

"Dec. 27. I would now acknowledge my gratitude to the great God for his unnumbered mercies to me. Though I have rebelled against him, and have nothing but guilt and misery to recommend me to his notice, yet he is still gracious, and saith, 'Deliver him from going down to the pit,' &c. I can truly say in this important concern, I have acknowledged him and he has directed my steps."

" Yesterday I rambled in the morning to Surrey Chapel, to hear Mr. Jay. His subject was—Overcoming the world. He first showed in what light we should view the world; viz. as an enemy: and then, what it is to overcome it. 1. To use the good things of it and yet not to have it as our ultimate end. 2. To put everything in its proper place. 3. A proper management of secular affairs. 4. A suitable spirit and behaviour amidst every changing scene. 5. A willingness to leave it. He observed, that, by a proper use of it, everything except sin may prove a blessing, and by an improper use of it, everything except grace may prove a curse. In the evening I heard Mr. Wilks at the Tabernacle. O that I could but improve more under such great privileges !"

" January 1, 1791. I trust I have endeavoured to begin the year not only with some degree of praise and thankfulness for past mercies, but also with devoting myself afresh to be the Lord's, wishing to be still guided by his unerring counsel.

" To-morrow evening Mr. Berridge is to preach for the first time at the Tabernacle;* I hope he will come with fresh life and vigour."

" January 8. It affords great encouragement and support to the people of God that every minute circumstance in life is under the direction of unerring wisdom, and sent for some good end.

" We have had a fresh proof of the vanity of this world in the death of Mr. Sibley. What a mixture of happiness and misery have we here below! and as the sweetest and dearest joys of life are derived from virtue, so the most distressing sorrows may find a just relief in religion and sincere piety. Though we may say of many things here, ' It is good,' yet of none can we say, 'It is a constant and everlasting good.'

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* The Rev. John Berridge, A.M., the eccentric, but truly excellent vicar of Everton, in Bedfordshire.

"I lately opened Dr. Watts's second volume of The Improvement of the Mind, upon '*Vanity inscribed on all things.*' He observes, 'The God of nature has pronounced an unpassable period upon all the powers, and pleasures, and glories of this mortal state. Let us then be afraid to make any of them our boast or our happiness; but point our affections to those diviner objects whose nature is everlasting. Let us seek those religious attainments, and those new-created powers of a sanctified mind, concerning which it shall never be pronounced that their time shall be no longer.' I would wish these truths to be deeply impressed upon my mind."

"January 15. How easy to see other people's failings, while our own are unobserved, and how desirable to have such real friends as will in a proper time and way point them out to us! One observes, 'They that mean to make no use of friends will be at little trouble to gain them; and to be without friendship is to be without one of the first comforts of our present state; to have no assistance from other minds in resolving doubts, in appeasing scruples, in balancing deliberations, is a very wretched destitution.'

"Above all, may we be seeking and striving after more of the knowledge and love of God exhibited in the works of creation and providence, but chiefly to be experienced in the riches of his grace in Christ Jesus. Herein is love, to pass by fallen angels and to take upon him the seed of Abraham, to save a ruined world; to become poor that we might he made rich; to die, that we might live; and with whose work the Father hath declared himself well pleased. I want to resemble this adorable Redeemer in being 'holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.'"

"January 21. I am deeply convinced of the pleasure of obliging even in small matters, and of the happiness of a humble and serious frame of mind.

"I believe we should get through this wilderness with more comfort if we could feel more the force of the words of Jesus,—'In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me ye shall have peace.' O that all our friends and relations would seek diligently after this never-failing source of happiness in the altogether lovely Jesus!"

"February 5. I am thankful that I have never been of a restless, changeable disposition.

"May the Lord bless us indeed, and grant us his Divine presence! for I am fully convinced that nothing can prosper in any view without his blessing.

"May it not be observed, that although the possession of any temporal good may not in general be equal to the expectation, yet, on the other hand, the evils of life are not found so formidable in reality as our imagination would describe?

"There is something wonderful in those words,—'Crucified with Christ.' Upon this subject, Mr. Law, in his Devout Call, says, 'We must not consider our Lord as suffering in our stead only, but as our representative, acting in our name, and with such particular merit, as to make our joining with him acceptable to God. Hence, as to his sufferings, if we suffer with him we shall also reign with him; as to his crucifixion, 'knowing that our old man is crucified with him;' as to the death of Christ, the condition is, 'if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him;' as to his resurrection, 'if ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above.'"

"February 12. It is certainly true that we do not sufficiently prize our mercies till we really prove their value, by feeling our loss without them.

"It is really animating when we can look back upon any important undertaking and be convinced that what we have done is right.

"I trust we shall be enabled to live to some good purpose, and be favoured as instruments in promoting the kingdom of our Redeemer.

"Mr. Bodily is in London, on the same errand as when I saw him in Manchester; there is likewise another case from Newfoundland, where much good has been done. Many of the soldiers who have been stationed there for a fixed time, have gone away changed men, through preaching in the name of Jesus."

"February 26. O for wisdom and direction from above! I want to be more convinced of my own weakness and inability, and to confide in Him who has said, 'as thy day is, so shall thy strength be.'

"After all our present pursuits and contrivances, what is this vain world? As God's work, it is certainly an effect of infinite wisdom and power; but as used by the generality, one knows not whether to call it a world, or the fashion of it which is continually passing away. Happy they who have discerned this vanity in early life, and who have found the pearl of great price, which is only worth seeking after and contending for! The following lines of Dr. Watts' are very striking.

"My God, I never long to see
My fate with curious eyes,
What gloomy lines are writ for me,
Or what bright scenes may rise.

"In thy fair book of life and grace
May I but find my name
Recorded, in some humble place,
Beneath my Lord the Lamb."

I wish I could act under this influence.

"What a great mercy is a religious education! How many snares and temptations do those who have been favoured with it escape! Not only do I reflect upon this with pleasure, but likewise on the advantage of being brought up to an active and useful employment."

"May we possess godliness with contentment, which is great gain, and meet in that blessed state where there will be no more parting, but a fulness of joy!"

"March 5. I suppose you have heard of the death of Mr. Wesley, [Rev. John Wesley.] I think we may say a truly great and good man, and an eminent servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. Surely he, together with the ministers connected with him, have been the means of reforming and converting multitudes in various parts. The difference between the serious part of his followers and moderate Calvinists is scarcely perceivable. I feel for the loss which the church of God sustains. May the great Head of the church send forth more labourers! I would value all that love Jesus, without regarding their party."

"March 12. Everything that befals us is certainly brought about according to the wise superintending providence of God, for not even a sparrow falleth to the ground without his knowledge.

"Mr. Cockin [Rev. J. Cockin] has said, and abides by it, that we cannot love our relations too well. We have debated this matter with him at our house, but every year he is of the same opinion; and undoubtedly, if we are but enabled to love God supremely, this must be right and pleasing in the sight of God, whose nature is love, and who has commanded us to love one another.

"There has been a general talk in London, and I suppose in the country, respecting the late Mr. Wesley. The funeral sermon was preached on Wednesday morning, by Dr. Whitehead. There was for several days before, a great crowd of people to see the corpse dressed in his gown, band, &c. Mr. Collins preaches next Sabbath morning at their chapel."

The last of this series of letters, dated March 19, 1791, thus concludes:—

"May we endeavour to enjoy God in all earthly comforts, and then they will prove blessings indeed."

The preceding extracts, while they show that my father acted in the fear of God, and with a desire to follow his guidance, and to promote his glory, prove also that his piety had attained to some considerable degree of maturity, and that it was of an eminently evangelical character, animated and sustained by that great constraining motive, the love of Christ. It was also a practical and operative principle. He carried his religion into the ordinary concerns of life, and did not suffer the duties of his secular calling so to occupy his mind and absorb his attention as to disqualify him for religious engagements, or indispose him for spiritual exercises and heavenly aspirations.

In his attention to business, he was actuated by a conscientious regard to what was just and right.

In a letter, dated November 27, 1790, written from Coventry, he says:—

"I feel particularly when here, the need of wisdom and direction to act circumspectly, and would always endeavour to do to others as I would wish them to do to me. I am satisfied that the exercise of religion in our secular callings is attended with the greatest advantages."

These letters show that my father's tastes were simple, and that he conscientiously wished to avoid every thing showy, expensive, or extravagant. He *began right* as a housekeeper, fitting up his house in a plain manner, not purchasing costly furniture, or adopting a superfluous style of ornament, but at the same time sparing nothing that would conduce to real comfort or domestic accommodation.

He had too much independence of mind to be a servile follower of the sequacious herd. He would not adopt customs and practices which did not commend themselves to his own judgment, and meet the approbation of his conscience, merely because they were common. "I really pity," he says, "the genteel part of the world that are slaves to fashion."

But the most striking feature of his character which these letters exhibit, is the courage and resolution, inspired by a strong sense of duty, and desire in all things to follow the intimations of God's providence, and to act agreeably to his ascertained will, which he repeatedly and strongly avows. He was naturally timid and retiring. He says of himself, in the unreserved frankness of confidential communication:—(February 19, 1791)—"I have always found a great diffidence in my natural disposition, and have not been inclined at any time to put myself very forward. I would wish to be little, unseen, unknown, as it relates to the world, and to remember there is a crown and a kingdom to be obtained and enjoyed, which are infinitely covetable. Yet I have often found that beyond my expectation I have been enabled to follow the way pointed out by Providence."

Had he chosen his own path, and followed the course of his own inclination, he would probably in future life have sought retirement, and courted the shade of obscurity; but he was ever ready to listen to the call of duty, and to lose sight of difficulties that might obstruct the way, when a particular path was pointed out to him, and he could hear the voice of God saying, " This is the way, walk thou in it." He felt a deep conviction that "the path of duty is the path of safety,"—that "we may expect God's blessing when we act agreeably to his will in the dispensations of his providence," that—" he who walketh uprightly," with sincerity of intention and conscious integrity toward God, walketh securely,—that "the righteous" may be "bold as a lion,"—that, in short—to adopt his own language, (November 8, 1790,) "although we ought not to do anything rashly, yet when convinced that we are acting in a manner agreeable to the will of God, we ought not to give way to gloomy forebodings, under an apprehension of difficulties, some of which may prove imaginary, and which can only be conquered by daring to attempt them."

He was married, March 31, 1791, at the Collegiate Church, Manchester, to the object of his choice, Elizabeth, younger daughter of the late Mr. Arthur Clegg, of that place, timber merchant, one of the founders of Mosley street Chapel, and many years a valuable deacon of the Congregational church meeting there.

I will now insert some extracts from letters, written to my mother, chiefly during her absence on visits to her parents at Manchester.

"September 1, 1791. Let us always remember not to expect too much from each other, nor of anything below the sky. Read the first eleven verses of the second chapter of Ecclesiastes.

"I assure you I keep close at home, for you know it is not my natural disposition to like much company. If I err in this, I console myself it is an error on the right side. I think the more we love home, the happier we shall be.

"Mr. Bull* is gone home; he only preached two Sabbaths at Surrey Chapel, on his return from Brighton. He is an eccentric genius. I heard a very curious charity sermon from him last Thursday evening at Dr. Stafford's, [New Broad street.]

"I have copied out a few of Mr. Lavington's sermons: it is tiresome work, yet I think they are well deserving the trouble."†

In a letter, written May, 1793, after touching references to his first-born child, whom my mother had taken into Lancashire, and mentioning the pressure of business, he adds :—

"I want to enter more fully into the meaning of that text which directs us to be careful for nothing, but to consult God in everything, and by prayer and supplication to make known our requests unto him. O the advantages of true religion every way! It gives a relish to social life, it makes us humble and happy in every situation, and fits us for the enjoyment of God in glory which shall never end. May you and I feel more of its power, and walk in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord blameless.

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* Rev. William Bull, of Newport Pagnell, Bucks, the friend and correspondent of the poet Cowper.

† Rev. Samuel Lavington, of Bideford, Devon; a very striking and impressive preacher, of whose sermons my father was to the last a great admirer. He had begun transcribing some of them in the year 1787.

"The collection for the poor at Mosley street [Manchester] was great considering the times. I hope other congregations will collect likewise. It is a good work to distribute to the necessitous, industrious poor. I hope you will get much spiritual good in this journey, and do all the good you can."

"May 14, 1793. I cannot but hope that before this reaches you, both you and Mr. C. [my maternal grandfather] have been restored to health, and wish that every *little* cross may have as good an effect upon the mind as if it was much heavier. How anxious we are to avoid troubles, and yet we must have them, man being 'born to trouble!'"

He then refers to the Life of Lady Elizabeth Russell, which he had lately been reading, and transcribes this passage from one of her letters: "Health, if strictly considered, is the first of earthly blessings. I can truly say, my friendships have made all the joys and troubles of my life; and yet who would live without love?" After mentioning in honourable terms her husband, Lord William Russell, at whose trial she appeared in court, and adverting to the touching incident that, when the attorney-general told him he might use the hand of one of his servants in waiting to take notes of the evidence, Lord Russell answered, that he asked none but that of the lady that sat by him—he quotes another sentence expressive of her tender affection and fond remembrance of her murdered husband, as expressing his own feelings, "though, blessed be God! (he adds) in very different circumstances."

After referring to the case of some young men, whom it appears his father had assisted in establishing in trade, who "a few months previously were literally making haste to be rich, grasping at everything, and then in such straits and difficulties as threatened a total reverse," he adds :—

"May we not say, 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity?' Here is proof of it very near to us indeed. I trust it will be a warning for years to come.

"Yesterday being the Sabbath, I heard Mr. Cockin in the morning at the Tabernacle, from Rev. vii. 9: 'I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, stood before the throne and before the Lamb,' &c. The vast multitude he argued from the extent of Christ's atonement, from the salvation of all dying in childhood, and from the effects of the Gospel, particularly in the latter day. He said it was supposed one-third of the human race died in childhood, and proved they went to heaven from two texts, viz., 'their angels do always behold the face of our Father,' and Christ's saying of them, 'of such is the kingdom of heaven.' And (he added) if they are fit for heaven, surely they are fit subjects for a religious ordinance.* May we not draw this inference, that whether the Lord spare our ——— or take her away in childhood, it must be well either way? In the afternoon, ——— and I went to hear Mr. Easton† conclude a former discourse on keeping holy the Sabbath-day. It was a discourse particularly suitable for him as a young man, and I trust the sermons he hears, and the examples which are set before him, have a tendency to impress his mind, and to convince him that there is something excellent in religion. In the evening, ——— and I went to Tottenham Court to hear Mr. Cockin again. His subject was, Zech. ix. 11: 'As for thee, also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.'"

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* My father was, to the end of his life, a strenuous maintainer of the right of infants to baptism on the ground of their being comprehended in the covenant of grace made with Abraham, in whom, through his great descendant, Jesus Christ, all the nations and *families* of the earth were to be blessed.

† Minister of the Scotch Secession Church, then meeting in Red Cross street.

He then refers to the "gay people" who attended that chapel, and to the dress of some of the ladies,—feathers, and other ornaments; adding, "I am sure they are no ornaments to the self-denying religion of the meek and humble Jesus."

"June 1, 1793. We should always be thankful for afflictions, because they work for our good, and have a tendency to promote our immortal interests. If everything went smoothly, we should be ready to say, 'My mountain stands strong, I shall never be moved;' whereas it is God's gentle hand of affliction which makes truly great, [referring to a sermon which he had lately heard from Mr. Ashburner,* from Psalm xviii. 35, 'Thy gentleness hath made me great.'] God's design, if we are his children, is to bring us to Zion above as well as to Zion below, (the church,) but we should be very indifferent about going to heaven, were it not for this troubled state; and though it is a thorny maze, God can give us shoes of iron and brass. He (Mr. A.) is a truly comforting, experimental preacher. I heard him on Tuesday at Tottenham Court from these words, 'Blessed be God who hath shown me his marvellous loving-kindness in a strong city.' First, he spoke on the loving-kindness of the Lord; second, showed that it appeared truly marvellous; third, that though David was persecuted and driven into corners, yet even then he was as safe as if he had been in a strong city. On Wednesday evening his text was, 'The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion,' &c."

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* Rev. Edward Ashburner, of Poole, one of the Tabernacle supplies, was a friend of the family, and one of my father's favourite preachers. It was the custom for my grandfather to bring him up from the Tabernacle after the Wednesday evening service to Highbury place, where he stayed till the following Sabbath morning.

"Coventry, June 14th, 1793. Last Sabbath the Rev. Mr. Moody* preached at Mr. Burder's meeting, and administered the sacrament, in which I joined. He is a great favourite of mine, and shines exceedingly at the sacrament. I find he is to be one of our annual Tabernacle ministers. He is very agreeable in company.

"O that our wills were made quite submissive to God's will as Abraham's was, when he was made willing—not only to give up his only son, but even himself to sacrifice him! What wonderful examples we have in the word of God! Mr. Moody's text in the evening was, 'Enoch obtained this testimony, that he *pleased God*,' which we should do in these respects, supreme love, faith, and holiness. May you and I abound in these more and more!"

The following lively description of a voyage to Margate will be read with interest, as affording a contrast to the present expeditious mode of making a passage to that place:—

"Aug. 8, 1793. I am truly happy to send you the news by the first post of my safe arrival at this place about four o'clock this morning, after being on board thirty-eight hours. I hope I shall never forget the Lord's protection of me in this voyage, and am very thankful indeed that you did not come with me. It is well we do not know what is before us. Had I known, I should never have left my own peaceful habitation, and most agreeable companion, to have gone through such a tedious passage merely for recreation. You know, we set off on Tuesday afternoon about two o'clock, the wind fair but calm, and weather fine. We did not get far down the river that evening. At eight o'clock we anchored till two o'clock the next morning, when we sailed again; the wind changed, became directly contrary, and rose very high. When we got out of the river the sea was rough, and we were obliged to tack continually; one side of the vessel was close to the water, the other was high enough. After sailing in this way all day, about seven o'clock in the evening we found we could not get into Margate, for want of an high tide, till one o'clock this morning; we therefore anchored in Margate roads, where it was not nearly so rough as at open sea. Soon after, the storm began. It was awful to see the heavens gathering blackness, wind, rain, thunder, and lightning; the first and the last continued for a great while after the other two had ceased. I never saw such lightning. I was upon deck the whole day and all night till we landed—tired enough, you may be sure, and sometimes alarmed; but in such cases there is no help. I can never paint to your imagination the scene I beheld.

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* Rev. James Moody, of Warwick.

"The first night, when it was calm, we had a '*president*' as some called him, and we had tea and supper, songs, &c., but there was no more of this afterwards. I was much pleased with our captain,—he was very clever and attentive, and never swore."

My father afterwards mentions the kindness shown to him by Mr. Purchis, the Baptist minister at Margate.

"London, May 24, 1794. Mr. Sibley [a young man of his acquaintance] departed yesterday morning, and left a good testimony behind. Indeed, it has affected me, and excited fear lest my experience of religion should not bear the test of a sick and dying bed as his did. O that it may be sanctified to all, and especially to young people! How little it makes everything here appear, and yet how soon do we forget these warnings! My mother says she never knew such a death-bed—so happy, so patient, so rejoicing, at lucid intervals. How transitory the world! O that we were wise, and would consider our latter end. Dr. Young says:

'The smoothest course of nature has its pains:
If wisdom has her miseries to mourn,
How can poor folly lead a happy life?
That man greatly lives,
Whate'er his fate or fame, who greatly dies.'"

"May 27, 1794. Mr. Sibley's funeral is to take place on Thursday. Mourning to-day, mourned for to-morrow. Those that sleep in Jesus are certainly taken away from the evil to come.

After mentioning his first-born child in terms of parental fondness, he adds,—

"But we must remember, a flower is often soon cut down."

"Coventry, June 12. I hope to find benefit by having less care and more fresh air here than in London. I want much, while walking alone, to have my heart lifted up to God as my chief good, and to heavenly objects as my supreme pursuit."

In the postscript he mentions a copy of Flavel's works in folio which he had seen to be disposed of, and adds, "the worst of it is, when I buy large books I have no time to read them."

The following letters give some account of a journey to the coast of Sussex, Hampshire, and the Isle of Wight.

"Gosport, Aug. 16, 1795. You have heard of our getting safe to Brighton, whence we had a fine view of the sea, much superior to that from Margate. We walked to the adjoining camp, which was a new scene for me—the soldiers sleep on hammocks. In the evening we went to the promenade, where we had a sight of his Royal Highness [the Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV.] and some thousand genteel vain people. We left Brighton yesterday morning, and were much pleased with the town of Arundel, and the situation of the Castle, the seat of the Duke of Norfolk; also with the city and cathedral of Chichester. The bishop is between eighty and ninety, and rides out frequently on horseback; he is the only one made in the last king's reign.* We got to Portsmouth last night; the entrenchments and fortifications round it struck me as if it had been some French town. We crossed the water to this place; heard Mr. Bogue preach from 1 John v. 1—3. It was a comment [exposition] which was very pleasing and instructive, and I hope it has not been a lost opportunity. He said, some were for receiving one table of the law, but wished to break the other to pieces; but he showed we must both love God and keep his commandments, as in a family we must respect and honour our father, and not only so, but must love our brothers and sisters. We must keep God's commands *spiritually* and *universally*. They were only grievous to a wicked man; a moderate person finds no difficulty in abstaining from drinking to excess, nor an honest man from stealing. He is a great preacher, his place is new and large, and he has a noble congregation.

"I firmly believe there is no happiness but in God; and as to inferior things, we must seek it in domestic life, moderation, and contentment."

"Newport, Isle of Wight, Aug. 19, 1795. On the Lord's-day evening we heard Mr. Hill [Rev. Rowland Hill] on Portsmouth Common, preach out of doors, to several thousand people, from the parable of the Prodigal Son—afterwards called to see him. He then intended to leave next day, after supplying four Sabbaths, [at the chapel on Portsmouth Common, now called Portsea.]

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* Sir William Ashburnham, Bart., appointed in 1754.

"We arrived on the island yesterday afternoon at Ryde. To-day we have seen highly romantic scenes and pleasant seats, and been much entertained. We have this afternoon seen capital paintings at Sir Richard Worsley's. Poor man—how I pity him! he is now our ambassador to Venice—separated from his wife—their only son, nineteen years of age, lately dead, and a servant or two in the house to show it. We are the people who enjoy it; but I wish him happier—to be as I am, with a wife and child—but I have had a better education, and greater advantages."

The above extracts may be allowed to speak for themselves as to the points of character which they illustrate. I must, however, be permitted to remark how clearly they show that my father was formed for the enjoyment of happiness in domestic life—that he was a kind affectionate husband, a fond and tender parent. They indicate also a greater degree of warmth and intensity of feeling than I believe he generally obtained credit for in future life.

CHAPTER VI.

HIS READING—EXTRACTS FROM BOOKS—POLITICAL OPINIONS—SENTIMENTS CONCERNING SLAVERY AND WAR.

I DO not find any indications that my father, after the expiration of his apprenticeship, devoted much time to mental cultivation. Probably his attention—like that of many young men engaged in business—was too fully occupied by its concerns to allow of his being either a general reader or a close student; and there were not, at that time, those facilities and inducements which now abound on every hand to intellectual improvement. It is much to be lamented, that the most valuable years in the life of a young person should be suffered to pass away, without his attaining an increased degree of mental developement, as well as large additions to his previously acquired stock of general knowledge and useful information. Young men engaged in business should be urged, by a strong sense of duty, to redeem a portion of time for mental improvement, and to devote at least some of the precious *morning* hours of every day to reading and study, as well as to devotional exercises.

I have no reason to suppose that my father altogether neglected the cultivation of his mind in the interval between his entering upon business and his marriage. The reader has already been furnished with some proof that he was in the habit both of reading and thinking, although he probably sustained serious disadvantage in future life from not having gone through a more general and extensive course of study. The books which he read were chiefly, but not exclusively, theological and devotional. He had evidently a taste for moral science and political economy, and was not unacquainted with the writings of Adam Smith, Johnson, and Burke, although not profoundly versed in their learned and eloquent productions. It must also be admitted that his early education had been of too restricted a nature to inspire a keen relish, or even a decided taste, for literary pursuits. This was a serious deficiency, which it was perhaps beyond his power fully to supply in after life. It arose from an erroneous idea which, in his younger days, prevailed to a deplorable extent. Orthodox Dissenters have greatly mistaken their interest, not to say failed in their duty, since the middle of the last century, in making no provision for the academical training of those of their young men who were destined to the pursuits of trade, manufactures, and commerce.

What he did read, however, he read with close attention; and was in the habit of making extracts from the works which he perused. Several small memorandum books have been preserved in which he has entered striking passages from political pamphlets, speeches in parliament reported in the newspapers, as well as from larger works, and also anecdotes, pointed sentences, and memorable facts. These books, written between December 1791, and 1799, have been preserved, and I shall now avail myself of them, by selecting some portion of their contents as illustrative of his views, feelings, and opinions. In the present chapter I shall confine myself to political and public matters.

My father was evidently a close observer. At an early period of life, if not deeply conversant with books, he had attained considerable knowledge of men and things. He noted with accuracy and attention, and with deep interest, human actions and passing events. He was not one of those who abjure politics as forbidden ground to a Christian. He was too much both a patriot and philanthropist to be an unconcerned or indifferent spectator of public events and political changes. He early formed his own opinions, and having once embraced them, from deliberate conviction, he, to the latest period of life, stedfastly adhered to them. He too well understood the intimate and inseparable connexion between civil and religious freedom not to be zealously concerned for the preservation and perpetuation of the constitutional rights and civil liberties of the British people, nor could he regard with indifference the advancement of political knowledge and the progress of civil liberty in other countries. He watched with deep interest the movements which led to that grand experiment—the French Revolution; and although, with all good men, he deeply deplored those fearful horrors and excesses by which its progress was marked, he concurred much more with the views and sentiments of Sir James Mackintosh than with those of Burke in reference to that momentous event.

He was a zealous Whig, although rather of the democratical than of the aristocratical class. He knew the importance of watchfully guarding and strenuously preserving the rights and privileges of the people, and while desirous to maintain the just prerogatives of the crown, was also jealous of its increasing influence and encroaching power, as well as of the undue preponderance of the aristocratical element in our national constitution. He was a strenuous advocate for a temperate reform in the representation of the people, and warmly sympathised with the noble efforts of the leading patriots of the day, to remove those corruptions and abuses—the accumulated growth of ages—which, while they defaced and disfigured, threatened also to undermine the fairest political fabric that the hands of man have reared. He thought that those men were worthy of all praise, and deserving of all support, whose lofty aim it was, not to subvert and destroy, but to preserve and maintain the British constitution, by rescuing it from the deforming hand of corruption, and restoring it to its original purity. I will transcribe a few short sentences from his notes, written in the years 1793-4.

"The way to make a people hate its present government, would be—to inform them, that it will not admit of any reform."

"As our constitution was anciently founded in liberty, it ought not to be destroyed as if it was the government of despotism."

"Where is the danger of restoring to its genuine principles our constitution of King, Lords, and Commons?"

"They are the best friends of the king who are for a full and equal representation of the people."

His opinions and sentiments concerning the wars in which this country had been engaged since the middle of the last century, were of a very decided character. His own language, exactly descriptive of his real feelings, uttered in my hearing, not many years before his death, was,—"I *detested* both the French and the American wars." I have already adverted to the circumstance of his youthful ardour not having been enkindled by early admiration of those savage heroes and ruthless conquerors, whose cruel exploits and bloody achievements are celebrated in the Iliad. He had no sympathy with such fierce destroyers.

Concerning the American war, no words can be more expressive of his own sentiments, than those which he has quoted from Mr. Pitt,* who described it as having been "conceived in injustice, nurtured in folly, pregnant with mischief of every kind upon the unhappy and deluded people of this country, who were made the instruments to effect the wicked purposes of its authors. The expense was enormous, while our victories were indecisive, and our defeats fatal,—victories celebrated only with a temporary triumph, over our brethren struggling in the holy cause of liberty,—and defeats which filled the land with mourning for the best blood of the nation shed in the impious cause."

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* The celebrated William Pitt. See his Speeches, vol. i. pp. 18, 19.

He was a great admirer of the first Earl of Chatham for his many noble and statesman-like qualities, but especially for his determined, uncompromising opposition to this hateful war. He often used to quote that great man's impassioned appeal to the House of Lords on the horrid proposal to employ the scalping-knife of the Indian savage against our American brethren. I find among his extracts the following passage from a speech of Lord Chatham during the American war:—"If the ministers still persevere in misadvising and misleading the king, I will not say that they can alienate the affections of his subjects from his crown, but I will affirm that they will make the crown not worth his wearing; I will not say that the king is betrayed, but I will pronounce that the kingdom is undone."

He frequently mentioned the sarcastic language of Burke in reply to a proposal of Lord North to diminish the extent of this calamitous war, to the following effect:—"The noble lord must have war, but he is now willing to have it on a reduced scale. Instead of a man-of-war, he will now be content with a small frigate-of-war; instead of a large folio, he now asks a pocket volume—a war in duodecimo!"

He deemed the first war with France* unjust and iniquitous from the very commencement. He considered that it must ever be the true policy and interest of this country to be at peace with all the world—to maintain strict neutrality, and not to interfere in the quarrels of other countries, but merely to stand prepared to repel the attack of an invading foe.

As I consider it a highly honourable circumstance in my father's character, that he was from the first a warm opponent of this war, and so continued at a time when the war mania generally raged, and too extensively prevailed even among the religious and evangelical portion of the community, I shall present his views more fully before the reader.

I have heard him mention some animated conversations, at an early stage of the conflict, between himself and a gentleman of his acquaintance, a fellow member of the Tabernacle, who was a vehement defender of the war. On one occasion, that gentleman remarked, "Nothing else will save the country;" my father's prompt reply was, "Nothing else will ruin the country." After the early successful progress of the French arms, the boasting advocate, who had before expressed a confident expectation that the struggle would speedily be terminated, and a successful result easily attained, assumed a lower tone. My father urged him with the pointed question, "Why did you begin?" What the wise man says of strife between individuals, may with equal force and propriety be applied to war between nations: "The beginning of strife is as the letting forth of water." Alas! what a desolating torrent—what an overwhelming tide of bitter woes has the opening of this floodgate poured over Europe—and what traces of devastation has it left behind, if not indelible, yet destined to endure to remote generations!

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* Declared February 11th., 1793.

My father's opinion was, that the interference of this country was not only unprovoked and utterly unjustifiable, but also exceedingly foolish and impolitic—that we, in fact, made Napoleon what he subsequently became, by treating him as a person of much greater consequence than he really was; or, according to one of his extracts,—"France owes her triumph to your folly."

I might quote many passages from his note-books concerning this war, but I will take only two or three. He has inserted the following extract from the Marquis of Lansdowne's speech, April 15, 1793, upon the Traitorous Correspondence Bill: "The wisdom of our ministers appeared in being determined to take care of the interests of this country, by pursuing a plan for the utter destruction of the French. All our happiness and safety depended, it seemed, upon the liberal, humane idea of starving twenty-six millions of our fellow-creatures, upon which we were to build our prosperity! This was as foolish as it was inhuman."*

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* "Mr. Pitt commenced this war by the seizure of neutral ships laden with corn, and bound to the ports of France."

The two following are from speeches of Charles James Fox, my father's favourite statesman:—

"Both the present and the American wars were owing to a Court party in this country that hated the very name of liberty; and to an indifference amounting to barbarity in the minister, to the distresses of the people." (1794.)

"There is no danger from an invasion, but from an obstinate going on with the war, which cannot fail to be attended with the ruin of our credit, our commerce, and our free constitution. . . . . From whatever quarter comes the first act of hostility, those are the aggressors who refuse to enter into a treaty, or pacific negociation upon any terms." (1795.)

He has entered the substance of Lord Stanhope's protest against a war.

"1. It is unnatural, barbarous, and calamitous.

"2. Peace is always for the interest of the common people.

"3. The people in France are desirous of amity and friendship.

"4. It is injurious to our true interests to assist other powers to restore a tyrannical form of government in France.

"5. A war is dangerous to our allies, hazardous with respect to our internal peace, and injurious to our commerce, which is the great source of our wealth.

"6. Our numerous taxes and the high price of provisions must be increased thereby,

"7. Because these misfortunes ought the more to be deprecated, as it clearly appears that it would still be more easy to avoid them, if our ministers were to prefer a mild, just, and pacific system to the horrors of war, carnage, and devastation."

The following appear to be extracts from a sermon preached on a thanksgiving-day, in 1793:—

"What is the difference between the haughty duellist, with his provided second, meeting his adversary with sword and pistol behind a hedge, and two kingdoms with their high-spirited regiments slaughtering one another in the field of battle? It is the difference between the murder of one man, and the murder of a hundred thousand. It stirs up and kindles every passion of fallen nature, that is contrary to the all-humble, all-meek, all-loving, all-forgiving, all-saving spirit of Christ. It unites, it drives, and compels nameless numbers of unconverted sinners to fall, murdering and murdered, amongst flashes of fire, into a fire infinitely worse. . . . Oh, sad subject for thanksgiving days! . . . For if there is joy among all the angels in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, what a joy must there be in hell over multitudes of sinners not suffered to repent!

"Christianity is LOVE, which is quite opposite to war; and it is clear, from Isaiah ii. 2, 4, that when true Christianity shall prevail, wars will cease."*

I cannot withhold his own expression of strong and truly benevolent and patriotic feeling on this painful subject, in some of his letters—

"May 11, 1793. [Referring to the French war,]—Our interference is a lamentable thing; but God has purposes to fulfil which we cannot fathom."

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* The following were inserted in 1793:—"The present war is said to cost £1500 per hour, which is £36,000 per day, £13,140,000 per year.

"A workman dismissed at Manchester, being told the war was not the cause of his misfortunes, replied, 'To me the case appears directly contrary; are we not at this moment employed in shooting our customers?'

"Remedy for war: Take of ministers of state a large handful, contractors and pensioners as many of each as can be found, place them in the front of the battle."

"May 31, 1794. We want an end put to this dreadful war, and to be an united and happy people."

"June 12, 1794. At St. Alban's we found the whole town illuminated, and great rejoicings on account of Lord Howe's victory. They are to illuminate here [at Coventry] to-morrow night; but I think we should boast when we obtain peace."

"October 8, 1796. Most people think Mr. Pitt's negociation will come to nothing. I am afraid it will much increase his guilt in this wicked business."

How truly did Cowper sing,—

"War is a game, which, *were their subjects wise*,
Kings would not play at!"

But the subjects of this kingdom were not wise in time. Their wisdom came too late, and was purchased at an enormous cost—torrents of human blood, and vast loads of silver and gold, "the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces." It was indeed a signal mercy that we were not consumed—that God did not scatter us as a people that delighted in war.

He whose hatred of war was so intense, could not but detest slavery.

In my father's note-books I find several passages relating to the odious and horrible traffic in human flesh and blood, and the cruel treatment of captured negroes reduced to a state of slavery, by the cupidity of men whose tender mercies are cruelty,—a trade which, to the disgrace of Britain, was long sanctioned by the government of the nation.

"Moved and carried in the House of Commons, April

1792. First, That the trade carried on by British subjects in the exportation of slaves from Africa to the West Indies ought to be immediately abolished.

"Secondly, That the Chairman be instructed to move for leave to bring in a Bill for the gradual abolition of the slave trade."

He then inserts some instances of cruelty mentioned in the House by that illustrious friend of his species, William Wilberforce. Among passages from "Debates on the Slave Trade," are the following:—

"Dundas was for eight years, as an experiment for the planters. Fox says—No, abolish it for five years, and let that be an experiment. With respect to time for convincing the planters that the abolition would not be detrimental to their interests, it was unsuitable to the dignity of Parliament to go about calculating in what time truth shall prevail over prejudice; in what time a truth of given force, shall penetrate into a head of given hardness?

"In pursuance of the wishes of the people, a resolution was come to, to abolish the slave trade. This year [1793] the thoughts of the people had been taken off [by other subjects,] and when the House of Commons divided, a majority were for doing nothing farther upon the subject."

"The slave trade destroys more in a year than the Inquisition does in an hundred, or perhaps hath done since its foundation." 1796.

"100,000 lives a-year sacrificed to the slave trade!"

Alas! that such a destructive and murderous trade should have been suffered for many following years to continue in all its unmitigated horrors.

My father used to speak with warm admiration of Fox, as the minister to whom belonged the distinguished honour of abolishing the slave trade, during the short interval between his accession to political power, on the death of his great rival, and his own lamented decease.*

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* Mr. Wilberforce, writing June 27, 1806, says, "I quite love Fox for his generous and warm fidelity to the slave trade [abolition] cause." Life by his Sons, vol. iii. p. 268.

CHAPTER VII.

NOTICE OF OTHER CONTENTS OF HIS MEMORANDUM BOOKS—POETRY, ETC.—APHORISTIC SENTENCES—EXTRACTS CONCERNING ESTABLISHMENTS AND TOLERATION.

My father was not born a poet,—he had very little imagination in his natural composition, and no means had been taken in his early life to develope his fancy, or enrich it by stores of acquired materials. It does not appear that he was ever a reader of poetry. A few passages from Milton, Pope, and Thomson, are thinly scattered over his books of extracts; and—which does, I confess, rather surprise me—only a couplet or two from Cowper, whose justly-admired poems were published in the years 1782—4. There was, however, one of our English poets, of whom he appears to have been a great admirer, and that is the solemn and sublime, but prosaic, Young. From the Night Thoughts copious extracts are inserted, but they were probably selected rather for the moral truth and evangelical sentiment which they contain, than for any poetical genius which they display. Dr. Young was probably at that time the general favourite with devout and serious young persons, and there is certainly much in his celebrated poem from which a young man may derive both moral improvement and spiritual benefit. But it will never inspire the imagination or kindle the poetic fire.

He was not, however, altogether insensible to poetical beauty, or the graces and charms of rhetorical composition. He inserts copious extracts from Robert Hall's Apology for the Freedom of the Press and General Liberty, printed in 1793, in which the pen of that great master of language depicts, in vivid and glowing colours, the threatening dangers of "the present crisis." The first passage he inserts is the eloquent tribute which that great writer pays to the splendid imagination of Burke.*

Among extracts from Mr. Robert Fleming's Apocalyptic Key is the following poetical "Description of Friendship."

"True friendship is a divine and spiritual relation of minds, an union of souls, a marriage of hearts, and a harmony of designs and affections; which being founded on a known agreeableness, and entered into by a mutual hearty consent, groweth up into the purest kindness and most endearing love; maintaining itself by the openest freedom, the warmest sympathy, and the closest secrecy. Such friends are like sweet flowers, agreeing in beauty, though perhaps differing in colour, as the rose and lily, the primrose and violet, twisted round one another and mixing both colours and smells. Or they may be compared to two pleasant rivulets flowing from one spring or fountain, though separated by some unlucky rising of the ground; yet meeting again in some kind and flowery mead, which they bless by their cheerful and gentle meanders; and, it may be, thence separated again at some distance where they glide along silently, murmuring to one another, and mutually complaining of the rude banks that obstruct their joining; until at length, having run their full course, and becoming one stream, they pour themselves forth into the great ocean itself and become one with it also: so that like the rest of the bitter sweets of this life, friendship has its occasional diversions,* until it flow into heaven, from whence it took its rise, which is the consummation of all Divine friendships, and where all true friends do at length happily meet, never to part."

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* "Hall's character of Burke.—'An author, whose splendid and unequalled powers have given a vogue and fashion to certain tenets, which from any other pen would have appeared abject and contemptible. In the field of reason, the encounter would not be difficult; but who can withstand the fascination and magic of his eloquence? The excursions of his genius are immense. His imperial fancy has laid all nature under tribute, and has collected riches from every scene of the creation and every walk of art. His eulogium on the Queen of France is a masterpiece of pathetic composition; so select are its images, so fraught with tenderness, and so rich with colours 'dipt in heaven,' that he who can read it without rapture may have merit as a reasoner, but must resign all pretensions to taste and sensibility. His imagination is, in truth, only too prolific; a world of itself, where he dwells in the midst of chimerical alarms, is the dupe of his own enchantments, and starts, like Prospero, at the spectres of his own creation.'"—See Works of Robert Hall, 7th edit. 1841, vol. iii. p. 123.

My father has inserted in one of his note-books the following admirable instance of presence of mind, and calm collected rationality and composure in the midst of a sudden surprise, which would, in most persons, have produced a high degree of agitation and alarm. He justly describes it as a striking instance at once of magnanimity and meekness:—

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* I have taken the liberty to substitute this for another phrase, to preserve the propriety of the figure. A few words also have been omitted in other passages.

"An Anecdote of Lady Russell.—She says, 'As I was reading in my closet, the door being bolted,—on a sudden the candle and candlestick jumped off the table, an hissing fire ran on the floor, and after a short time left some paper in a flame, which with my foot I put into the chimney to prevent mischief, then sat down in the dark to consider whence this event should come. I knew my doors and windows were fast, and that there was no way open into the closet but by the chimney; and that something should come down there, and strike my candle off the table in that strange manner, I believed impossible. After I had wearied myself with thinking, to no purpose, I rang my bell. The servant in waiting, when I told him what had happened, begged pardon for having, by mistake, given me a mould candle with a gunpowder squib in it, which was intended to make sport among the fellow-servants on a rejoicing day,' [during the reign of William III.] Her Ladyship bade the servant not to be troubled at the matter, for she had no other concern about it than that of not finding the cause."

A large proportion of these extracts are of a religious and theological character, consisting of passages from Owen, Charnock, and other eminent divines, as well as from later writers.

In the year 1793, public attention was much directed to the study of the prophetic portions of Scripture. My father has inserted several extracts from books and pamphlets on this subject. I will transcribe one, taken from a sermon of Mr. John Willison, a Scotch divine.

"Mr. W. thinks the 1260 years of the Pope's reign will be from A.D. 606, when Boniface III. got himself declared universal Bishop and Head of the Church, and assumed the title of Pope. A godly man once said, he had a longing desire to see this [happy change], but checked himself, saying, ‘ I shall go to heaven, and there the news of it shall quickly arrive, for both angels and saints shall rejoice at it.’ Let parents and heads of families do all they can for promoting the increase of Christ’s kingdom. Let us follow the example of the Jews in Nehemiah’s time, who repaired the walls of Jerusalem every one against his own house. How patiently did Joshua and the priests wait for the downfall of Jericho, till God’s set time was come !”

My father was always an admirer of striking aphoristic sayings, expressed in a terse and pointed manner, and in which much valuable sense is compressed into a few brief words.

The following sentences may serve as a specimen:—

“ Your hope [must be] founded on Christ alone. The love of God the spring of all your actions, and the word of God the rule of all your obedience.”

“ Everything will be wrong till we know the Gospel experimentally ; everything right afterwards.”

“We must have the knowledge of the head, with the experience of the heart, and the obedience of the hands and feet.”

“ Debasement of self is Christian perfection.”

“ Mr. Locke’s advice to a young man who was desirous of becoming acquainted with the doctrines of the Christian religion : ‘ Study the Holy Scripture, especially the New Testament. Therein are contained the words of eternal life. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter.’ ”

“ Religion hath three great duties, Faith, Hope, and Charity ; morality hath four chief virtues, Justice, Prudence, Temperance, and Fortitude.—Dr. Horne.”

"The perfection of wisdom is prudence."

> "With peaceful mind thy race of duty run:
> God nothing does, or suffers to be done,
> But thou wouldst do thyself, couldst thou but see
> The end of all events as well as he." *

"Mr. Reader prays, that God would fill his head with schemes for his glory, his heart with love, and his hands with work."

"Christians should be lions in God's cause, and lambs in their own."

One of the books which my father carefully read and studied, was, the Private Thoughts of the Rev. Thomas Adam, of Wintringham, a book in which the author shows that he had sounded the depths of Christian experience, and delivers his lessons of spiritual instruction in short pointed sentences.†

It appears by several of his notes, that his mind was much engaged and exercised in theological inquiries. He has made several extracts on the *vexata questio*, how far the decrees of God render the future events to which they relate certain, without impairing or at all interfering with the free agency, and consequent responsibility, of man. He has inserted a query on a much disputed point,—'Does faith precede repentance?' but it does not appear that he pursued the inquiry, probably deeming it unprofitable and vain. There was another question, upon which he evidently felt much interest, as he repeatedly adverts to it; viz. "Whether *all* infants—not merely the children of believers, but also those of the worldly and the wicked—dying in a state of infancy, are saved?" On this point his conviction was decided many years before his death. He believed that all who depart hence, not having "sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression," are made partakers of the benefits of Christ's redemption; being "justified by his blood, and saved from wrath through him," by virtue of the superabounding grace of God manifested to the human race through the intervention of the second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, who "appeared once in the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

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* These admirable lines are taken from Miscellaneous Poems, by John Byrom, M.A., F.R.S., 2 vols., Manchester, 1773, vol. ii., p. 345. The last two lines are printed thus:—

> "But what thou wouldst thyself, if thou couldst see
> Through all events of things as well as he."

† A new edition of this inestimable work, with an Introductory Essay by the present Bishop of Calcutta, was printed at Glasgow in 1823.

Although my father was not now connected with the regular Dissenters, he was himself, from conscientious and deliberate conviction, a Dissenter, and he well understood the great principles of Protestant nonconformity. The following passages will show that he had clear and enlightened views on the spiritual nature of the kingdom of Christ, and the absolute right of all men to worship God in the mode most accordant with the convictions of their own judgment and the dictates of their own conscience.

"We have always borne testimony against something, particularly against incorporating the church with the state; making the kingdom of Christ an appendage to the kingdoms of the world, [against] the absurdity of establishing one mode of religion in England, and another in Scotland; and against allowing a temporal lordship, and a place in the legislature, to the English bishops as office-bearers in the church, contrary to the express command of Christ."

Among extracts from a printed sermon on Equality, by the Rev. Samuel Bradburn, a Methodist minister, are the following:—

"Among the points wherein mankind are perfectly equal, one is [in their right to] uncontrolled liberty of conscience. The best that can be said in favour of toleration is, that it is tolerable. It proceeds from usurped authority. The same right that any individual has to tolerate another, another has to tolerate him; and by a parity of reason, each has the same right to be intolerant. What is true of individuals, is equally true of any greater number. The giving a man leave to worship God, does imply the blasphemous opposite, — the giving God leave to be worshipped. Ignorance causeth them to place religion not in loving God and our neighbour, but in notions, and the external forms of worship; and pride prompteth them to make proselytes."

CHAPTER VIII.

NOTES OF SERMONS—NOTICES OF EMINENT PREACHERS—VISIT OF REV. ANDREW FULLER TO LONDON TO COLLECT FUNDS FOR THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY—IMPRESSION PRODUCED UPON MY FATHER'S MIND BY SOME OF HIS SERMONS.

It was my father's custom to take notes of the sermons which he heard, as well as to make extracts from the books which he read. The practice of writing sermons, or portions of sermons, from the lips of the preacher, is one which has probably been transmitted to modern Dissenters from the early Nonconformists. The excellent Philip Henry, who first adopted it in his early youth, continued it constantly in later life, and "recommended it to others, as a means to engage their attention in hearing, to prevent drowsiness, and to help their memories after hearing."*

My father's memorandum books contain many notes of sermons—most of them merely transcripts, in a somewhat abbreviated form, of the heads and principal divisions, but others extended to greater length, and showing the facility with which he could seize the main thoughts of a discourse, and condense them into a small compass. This habit may probably account, in some measure, for the aptitude which he acquired for conveying much sense in a few words.

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* He carefully preserved all these notes, arranged in order, and "would advise people sometimes to look over the sermon-notes that they had written, as a ready way to revive the good impressions of the truths they had heard, and would blame those who made waste-paper of them,—for, saith he, the day is coming, when you will either thank God for them, or heartily wish you had never written them."—Life of Philip Henry, edited by Sir J. B. Williams, pp. 7, 9.

It appears, from these notes, that while the Tabernacle was the place of worship at which he attended, and I have no doubt his attendance was generally regular and constant, he did not entirely confine himself to the services held there, but occasionally "rambled" to other places of worship. He certainly heard some of the most eminent preachers, who either resided in London, or occasionally visited the metropolis to preach for several successive Lord's-days at chapels which were supplied by country ministers. At Spa-fields Chapel he frequently attended the preaching of the late Rev. David Jones, Rector of Langan, in South Wales; and I have heard him mention that when sermons were announced to be preached by that fervent and energetic minister, to be followed by collections, he left home with the intention of giving a certain sum, (probably a guinea,) but the persuasive power of the preacher constrained him to give double, and on one occasion—if not oftener—all the money which he had with him. He did not confine himself, however, to the class of preachers who were allied to the Methodists. He heard occasionally the chief ministers of the Independent, Presbyterian, and Baptist denominations in London—among whom may be mentioned the late venerable John Clayton, minister of the Weigh-house Chapel, Dr. Stennett, and Dr. Waugh. He also attended sometimes at parish churches or episcopal chapels to hear eminent clergymen—especially the Rev. John Newton, Richard Cecil, and Henry Foster. The last of these was a preacher whom he often extolled for his constant aiming at, and close grappling with the consciences of his hearers. I find short notes of several of his discourses transcribed in a separate book.

One of the preachers who supplied at Surrey Chapel, whom my father greatly admired, was a clergyman already mentioned, the late Rev. Thomas Pentycross, M.A., with whom my grandfather was well acquainted, and who kept up an intimacy with his two sons. He was a man of original powers and lively imagination, and occasionally introduced very striking figurative passages into his discourses. As I have often heard my father mention one of these passages, I shall insert the notes of the sermon containing it, which may serve as a specimen of the preacher's eloquent, energetic, and in some respects peculiar style.*

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* The notes of this sermon are more copious and exact than most of the others, and as my father never used short-hand, I was led to infer from this, and other circumstances, that they were taken from the preacher's notes. This I have since found to be correct. They are evidently copied from a MS., in Mr. P.'s own hand-writing, now in possession of my uncle, Joseph Wilson, Esq., to whom it was sent at his request. My father has omitted one passage in relation to the personified virtues of the French atheistical republicans.

"Mr. Pentycross at Surrey Chapel, January 1797, 1 Thess. i. 9, 10: 'How ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come.'

"From the impression [on the wax] we discover the seal; and from the nature of the conversions under the apostolic preaching, we learn what that preaching itself was. Hence it follows, that as the Thessalonians turned from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven—

"I. The apostle taught them to turn from idols, alleging, 1. That if their worship of idols was that of God through their medium, they worshipped God through a medium not only unworthy of God, but inferior to themselves. 'Forasmuch as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto wood or stone,' &c. 2. That if their worship of idols was that of departed heroes and benefactors, there was no evidence that these knew, when once gone, what was passing in this world, much less that they had power to afford us help. 3. That if their worship of idols was that of the powers of nature, or of virtues and moral qualities, it was most absurd; because the powers of nature are unintelligent, and the moral virtues, abstract ideas, which have no personality or subsistence by themselves.

"II. The apostle taught them to serve the living and true God—the fountain of all being, and well-being to others, and a most real and perfect existence, therefore, himself; one who could never deceive nor disappoint their expectations; to whom they were to go as so many poverties to unbounded riches, as so many miseries to essential love and pity, as so many guilts to infinite pardon and salvation, and as so many weaknesses to eternal strength and all-sufficiency.

"III. The apostle taught them to wait for his Son from heaven whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come. Consequently he pointed out the wrath to come, to which they were obnoxious; the atonement and righteousness of Jesus, for all who flee to him for refuge; and the public high and formal declaration of its immense sufficiency, by raising him, in quality of Mediator, from the dead. That all who use him should not be left to incur new wrath by their sins, but be sanctified by his Spirit, as well as justified by his merit, fitted for heaven, as well as admitted to it. That, nevertheless, they must die in common with all men; but that they should be raised from the dead, be transfigured in body like unto Christ's glorious body, should mount up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, who should come, first, to justify and vindicate them before an assembled world at the last universal judgment, and afterwards to conduct them in all perfection of body and soul to the perfection of all life, bliss, virtue, and glory in the heaven of heavens, where they should be settled for ever, to act the parts assigned to their regenerate natures, and to enjoy all good at the fountain-head of good to eternity. That all this attached to them only upon turning from idols to serve the living and true God; and that thenceforward they were to live and die, waiting for the Son of God from heaven.

"At preaching like this, what marvel if Jupiter, the fabled father of gods and men, perished before the Everlasting Father, the Prince of peace? what marvel if Neptune fell in pieces before Him who was heard rebuking the winds and the waves, and, though all deaf and irrational, yet they instantly obeyed, and immediately there was a great calm; who was also seen walking upon the sea, and wherever he was going to tread, the waves suddenly hardened for the moment into a pavement of Lacedemonian marble? Pluto was annihilated before Him upon whose shoulder was seen so conspicuously the keys of death and of hell. Could Apollo stand before Him who healed all manner of sickness and disease visibly by his word, or rather will; and at whose voluntary crucifixion the sun itself became for three hours self-extinct? What must become of Bacchus, when six water-pots filled to the brim only with water, are in a moment transmuted into wine, with all the properties of the grape long concocted by the sun, and long fermented and matured by age, full of colour, zest, and spirit—without a single particle of the fruit of the vine? The goddess of wisdom would no longer be borne when the Divine boy of twelve years old confounded the sagest Hebrew doctors, and by his Spirit at length imparted to thousands the full knowledge of all languages spoken upon earth, without the least previous acquaintance with any one of them. The divinity of the air died away when Jesus was seen rising leisurely from the ground, mounting through the regions of air as its proper Lord, walking upon the wings of the wind, and received by a cloud out of all human sight.

"Isaiah predicted this downfall of idolatry on the preaching of the Gospel when he said, one and another should be justified in Christ and should glory—and immediately adds, 'Bel boweth down; Nebo stoopeth; the idols are upon the carriages, their load is a burden intolerable to the very beasts that draw them.' [Chap. xlv. 23—25, xlvi. 1.]

"But let us come to a more minute contemplation of the not negative religion of turning from idols, but positive of—First, serving the living and true God; and, Second, waiting for his Son from heaven. 1, then, What is the nature of, how great the necessity for, and equally the pleasure in serving the living and true God? 2, What is the nature of, necessity for, and pleasure in waiting for his Son from heaven? You desire both. How shall you attain them? Just like the parties in the text. First: You must turn from your idols. Whatever known sin you indulge—worldliness—and, in short, whatever stands either in opposition to, or in competition with God. Else, your sins retained and indulged, you are not capable of these acts. Second: This done, you have only to turn to God for these and all things, in order to have them. They [the Thessalonians] only turned, and were instantly both enabled to serve, &c., and entitled to wait ever afterwards for the happy advent of the Son of God.

"What greatly commends this Scripture is—that it is evidently the apostle's own abridgment of all the Gospel—the history of grace—the essence of saving experience. The substance of all which the apostle desired, and his people became, was—serving the living and true God, and waiting for his Son from heaven.

"Here let me correct an error of the Christian world. We are apt to bound our views too commonly by the happiness of our souls immediately after death; but from very many places of Scripture, and for many reasons, it appears that we ought to carry our views much farther, to the coming of the Son of God, and to take into our fixed expectations the period of the consummation of our bodies and souls, and their ultimate perfect condition and final settlement after the judgment, when no change will take place again, but things be as they are to remain to all eternity."*

Among the preachers whom it appears from these notes my father heard, during the years in which these memoranda were written, may be mentioned, Dr.

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* My father was a great admirer of the sermon preached by this excellent clergyman in 1796 for the London Missionary Society, from which he used often to quote striking passages. A volume of 'Sermons, speculative, practical, and experimental,' by Mr. P., appeared in 1781. He died Feb. 11, 1808. A brief Memoir of him was inserted in the Evangelical Magazine for 1808, written by the late Rev. J. Raban, sometime minister of the Independent congregation at Wallingford.

Balfour, of Glasgow, the Rev. Charles Simeon, of Cambridge, Messrs. Bogue, of Gosport, Lambert, of Hull, Toller, of Kettering, Medley, of Liverpool, and Jay, of Bath. The last is the only one who survives, with vigour scarcely impaired, and continues to preach with earnestness and power but little abated, although half a century has elapsed from the time when my father used occasionally to hear him at Surrey Chapel in his youthful prime.

There were, no doubt, advantages resulting to my father in future years from his having heard so great a variety of celebrated preachers in his younger days, besides the direct spiritual benefit which he might derive from their preaching ; but there was one minister to whom he was probably more deeply indebted than to any other, and of whose sermons he appears to have retained a more lively and permanent impression.

In the spring of 1794 the late Rev. Andrew Fuller made a visit to the metropolis, in order to collect funds for the Baptist Missionary Society, then recently established. He preached sermons for this object at various chapels in London, and my father—under providential guidance—was led to hear several of these discourses, and others delivered by the same eminent man during some following years, which impressed his mind with a deep sense of those great Christian duties—active usefulness and liberal distribution. Thus, by the blessing of God, native original tendencies, previously existing dispositions, were confirmed and consolidated into strong convictions of duty, received a determinate practical direction, and became fixed and permanent habits. This may, perhaps, be regarded as the critical period of his life.

There is one circumstance connected with this visit, which, although apparently trivial, I cannot regard as unimportant. The arrangement first made was for another excellent Baptist minister—the Rev. Samuel Pearce, of Birmingham, to visit the metropolis on this errand; but he could not with propriety leave that place at the time fixed.*

As it appears that these sermons had a considerable effect in determining my father's future career of beneficent action, I shall insert his notes of those which bear more directly on liberality and a public spirit. He entered twelve of Mr. Fuller's discourses in a separate book, with fourteen of Mr. Jones', of Langan, three of Mr. Benjamin Francis', an excellent Baptist minister in Gloucestershire, and two of Mr. George Burder's. The following is the first of Mr. Fuller's:—

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* The following extracts from a letter of Mr. Fuller's to Rev. John Sutcliff, of Olney, Bucks, dated Kettering, 28 March, 1794, show that his visit to London at this time was in consequence of Mr. Pearce's detention in Birmingham: (the original letter is now in the possession of the Rev. Dr. Raffles, of Liverpool.)

"This week I received a letter from Birmingham, signed by their deacons, in which they inform me that there is a considerable work of God going on in Mr. Pearce's congregation. Many are added [to the church,] and many more are under serious concern. On this account, they cannot think it Mr. P.'s duty to leave his charge for four or five weeks, as had been agreed, to go to London to collect for the mission.

"The consequence is, we must one of us go, or the London liberality will be lost for want of a collector. They have consented to our going up the latter end of April. If you would like to go, I should be happy to give it up; but I suppose you, being but little acquainted with the Londoners, may be for declining it; if so, and I go, it must be on the condition of [my people] being supplied during my absence."

"A Charity Sermon—3 Epistle John, ver. 2: 'Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.'

"I. Lay down some of the leading marks of soul-prosperity.

"A prosperous soul like a human body that is healthy and active.

"1. One in whom the truth dwelleth, and dwelleth richly—'whom I love in the truth,' ver. 1. Truth is that to the soul which food is to the body; making it lively, active, vigorous. Of great importance what principles we profess, for all principles, whether good or evil, are influential, and productive of corresponding affections and actions. Wrong principles operate to produce strong delusions, the energy of error; right principles, also, are efficacious to produce right actions.

"2. In whom the doctrinal and practical parts of religion are united in just proportion. Some men are epicures, others pining for want; so some religious professors are clamorous for doctrinal truths, others, at the expense of truth, are crying up moral duties; but a healthy soul unites both.

"3. In whom the benefits of retired and active life are happily combined. Christians are the salt of the earth. The savour obtained in private must be spread abroad. Frequent retirement for prayer, meditation, and self-examination, will qualify us to mingle in society with advantage, and enter naturally and easily into discourse upon divine subjects.

"4. It is certainly accompanied by a good degree of public spirit. We should possess a largeness of heart, and serve the Lord through the whole course of life, even in temporal concerns. 'Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' If it is your main object to amass a fortune, you live to yourself, and not to God. There is such a thing as religious narrowness—no interest felt for the cause of Christ. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness [for yourself] and next seek the salvation of others. By seeking a public good we shall always find a private good. A public spirit is the spirit of the Gospel.

"5. One possessed of an unostentatious spirit. Such are meek and lowly amidst all their exertions. High minds, like high hills, are barren; valleys are productive, and so are humble souls.

"II. Soul prosperity is a standard by which to pray for temporal prosperity—for two reasons.

"1. It is thus rendered safe. We are then able to bear it. Almost all think they could bear a little more than they have. Oh, if I was in such an one's circumstances how much good would I do! This indicates great ignorance of the human heart. You must have observed that temporal prosperity has elated many. Does thy soul prosper so as to make it safe? Nothing else can enable us to bear it. One who was observed to have the same equanimity in prosperity as in adversity, said: 'In the former I enjoy God in all things, in the latter I enjoy all things in God, and find that a little, with his blessing, is enough,' This is, indeed, soul prosperity.

"2. The one renders the other a general good. It is to bless all around. Do not eat your morsel alone. For God to bless *him* is to bless a neighbourhood. Boaz, [a blessing to his servants.]

"I leave it for you to consider, whether there are not many who are outwardly in prosperous circumstances, but whose souls do not prosper. Perhaps there may be a greater proportion of generous persons in London than in any other place in the world; yet how many live to themselves even there, whose Christianity is extremely doubtful, whose evidences are very poor and scanty, and whose souls do not prosper! Generosity is not confined to the rich. Although poor in circumstances, if you have a tender, affectionate heart, you may relieve by your prayers. Let us do good to the bodies of men, as a medium of doing good to their souls."

One of the first of Mr. Fuller's sermons which my father heard was preached at the Tabernacle, May 19, 1794, from Psalm lxxvi. 10: "The wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder of wrath thou wilt restrain." In a letter to my mother, May 24, he thus writes: "The Lord is evidently doing great things in the earth, and bringing about [the fulfilment of] his ancient prophecies, and the earth must be silent before him. You remember Mr. Fuller's sermon;"—no doubt a sermon from Habak. ii. 20, "But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him." In another letter, written a few days afterward, he says:

"On Sabbath-day morning I went to a place I never was at before to hear Mr. Fuller. I heard him again at night at a meeting at the bottom of Wood street, which was very crowded. His text was 1 Thess. i. 10, 'And to wait for his Son from heaven, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come.' Speaking of the wrath of God, he said: I. It was wrath of a powerful God, of a just God, of a good God, and wrath *reserved* and everlasting. II. Of Jesus who delivers us from it; 1st, in a way honourable to his Father; 2nd, expensive to himself; 3rd, full and free to us. III. The exhortation—to wait for his second coming. May we be interested in this great salvation, for the wrath of *the Lamb* will be insupportable!"

I have often heard my father refer to this sermon as one that powerfully impressed his mind—and still more frequently to the following, which he heard on the 29th, and to which he thus refers in a letter dated 31st.

"On Wednesday evening I heard Mr. Fuller at Broad street—a collection sermon. The place was full—the sermon very striking—the text very uncommon (1 Kings xx. 40) 'And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone.' 1st. He showed that we have *a trust committed to us*—natural powers—property—influence—an immortal soul, and the souls of others—parents, the souls of children—ministers, the souls of their hearers. 2nd. That *this trust is often neglected,* through an inordinate attention to the busy concerns of life—our excuse being a want of time, and putting off by fair promises. 3rd. That all our excuses will be inadmissible another day. He showed the folly of our self-created wants, and the wisdom of reducing life to its native simplicity. I hope I shall remember some of these hints. He particularly recommended rising early, if we would thrive as to God and our souls."*

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* I have been favoured with a sight of Mr. Fuller's original collecting book, from which it appears that this honoured individual, who appealed to the Christians of the metropolis for aid in the noble attempt to evangelise India, then being made by his own denomination, did not restrict his applications to one class, or even to the whole body of orthodox Dissenters. The list contains the names of William Wilberforce, £5. 5*s*. H. Thornton, £5. 5*s*., R. Thornton, £5. 5*s*., Richard Hill, Bart., £2. 2*s*., and of the following clergymen: Thomas Scott, John Newton, Basil

The following is an extract from the notes of a sermon on the symptoms and cure of spiritual declension from Isa. xl. 31: "They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength."

"Primitive Christians were a hardy race. They were strong in the Lord. Great grace was upon them all. This is not the character of the generality now; but weakness in duties, irresolution in withstanding temptations, and despondency under afflictions. What is all this owing to? Worldly-mindedness. We are too much encumbered. The cares of this life in a great degree check vital godliness in the hearts of those who live in great cities, and so enfeeble us. We multiply our wants; we are more like elephants with castles on their backs than like those who make quick progress."

"June 19, 1796.—Isaiah lviii. 11: 'And thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not.'

"The sentiment is—those whom God waters, should water others—not a single act, but a continual spring. It is our honour, duty, and interest—

"I. Establish it: II. Apply it.

"I. Abraham—In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Laban blessed for Jacob's sake—Potiphar and the Egyptians for Joseph's sake.

"Favourites of Heaven should be blessings to others.

"The Israelites were chosen for a blessing to other nations.

Wood, Richard Cecil, also John Eyre and Rowland Hill. Among the contributors were the principal London Independents of that day—including my father. Mr. F. says of one of them, in some remarks appended to the list, "A very generous man—he is said to live for the good of others."

The holy land situated in the centre. 'Come thou with us, and we will do thee good.' God gave his only begotten Son, that his ministers might go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. What you have freely received, freely give. Planting a church is like setting up a golden candlestick. Certain branches of a family are called; they are to go home and tell what great things God hath done for them. 'When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.'

"II. Application. 1. God has watered you with a saving knowledge of himself; diffuse this knowledge—husband to the wife, father to the children. 2. God has blessed us as a country with the Gospel, with religious advantages—disseminate this Gospel. No nation that can water others so well as ours. 3. God has blessed the present generation, that they may be concerned to communicate the blessing to the generations that are to come. We should exercise gratitude for the past, and kindness for the future."

Another sermon, preached in 1796, was from 2 Cor. viii. 9: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty, might be rich."

The following notes are abridged from the MS.

"[We have here] two motives to liberality; the love of God in giving his Son, and the love of Christ in giving himself—supposed to be well known.

"I. Consider the view of Christ's native riches, and voluntary poverty in contrast.

"He was not dispossessed or deprived of deity, but there was a voluntary suspension of its exercise. 1. He was rich, in that he possessed the nature of God; poor, in that he took upon him the nature of man. 2. Rich as possessed of supreme dominion; poor as taking upon him the form of a servant. 3, Rich as possessing almighty power; poor in subjecting himself to weakness and dependence. 4, Rich as possessed of infinite honour; poor by subjecting himself to ignominy and reproach. 5, Rich as possessing infinite happiness; poor as becoming a man of sorrows.

"II. The necessary effect with regard to us. The consequences are, the invitations, promises, and hopes of the Gospel. The death of Jesus, an effect of Divine love. Mercy and truth meet together. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace.

"III. Application. 1. The subject wears a kind aspect to the poor. 2. It affords an example of benevolence, and kindness to the poor. 3. Christ exercised self-denial."

But the discourse of Mr. Fuller's which, I have reason to believe, had the greatest influence on my father's mind in future life, was from Eccles. xi. 1—4: "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days; give a portion to seven, and also to eight, for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth," &c. I have not been able to ascertain the date at which it was delivered in London, but probably it was one of the sermons preached in May, 1794. The following is a copy of his notes of this discourse:—

"A collection sermon: Eccles. xi. 1—4. In some countries, particularly Egypt, when the Nile overflowed, and the water sank to eight or ten inches, they threw the seed upon the waters, which [upon their subsiding] would sink into the soil, and save the labour of ploughing.

"In these verses are contained a duty, and motives to the performance of it. If you wish to have a man think well of religion, do him good. The rules are, 1st. What we give ought to be our own. Let justice take place before generosity. 2nd. What we give being our own, we are exhorted to give it *liberally*. Multiplicity of cases should not make us weary of well-doing. 3rd. We are taught to do good in such a way as to deny ourselves in order to accomplish it. That which you are to dispense, is called 'thy *bread;*' which you yourself have occasion for; otherwise it is only what the rich man gave to his dogs. 'Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye, through his poverty, might become rich.' 4. It is intimated that we should give, without regard to providential appearances. We are to act according to *present* ability. Those only who make a business of doing good will ever accomplish it.

"II.—The motives by which this duty is enforced:

"1. The reward which shall follow it. 'Thou shalt find it after many days.' There is often a harvest to such in this world. You scarcely ever knew such a man forsaken. Consider the difference in the reflection on a dying bed of £500 thrown away in gratifying the fancy, or expended in relieving the needy, and instructing the ignorant. You will find the reward at the day of judgment. Christ will say, 'I was hungry, and ye gave me meat,' &c. 2. The ills that hang over us; 'Thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.' He that hoards, may be the first deprived of it; no safe place, but the relief of the necessitous. 3. The end for which it is given us. Inanimate nature is called in to shame us—the clouds. If the heaven will hear the earth, should not we? No man's property is his own. We should spend our lives in doing good. Finally, we are reminded of the near approach of death. As the tree falls, so it lies. 'There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave.' The present state is a seed time, the future a harvest. There is a close connexion between our present and future state. Not that we shall arrogate anything to ourselves, [on the score of merit.] Those who sow sparingly shall reap sparingly, and those who sow plentifully shall reap plentifully."

Often have I heard my honoured father mention Mr. Fuller's remark on the phrase "thy bread,"—not a few crumbs, not a thin slice, but a large piece, a substantial portion of the loaf.* Let others really partake of thy bread—give a portion to seven and also to eight; let *many* share, and share largely of that which you call your own, which God has given you richly for enjoyment. Do not keep all your good things to yourself, or reserve them entirely for your own family; but divide and distribute a considerable measure of them among those who need; and let a large portion be presented on the altar of God as a free-will offering to his cause, a thank-offering for his great and manifold mercies, especially for "his unspeakable gift"—even his own Son, whom "he spared not, but freely gave up for us all." Do not give to God, who demands and deserves the *best*, and who "filleth you with the finest of the wheat," that which the dogs may eat—the crumbs that fall from your table—small morsels—your mere leavings and refuse; but consecrate to him a large mass of your necessary food, even "of the *children's bread.*" Alas! that professed Christians should ever seem to forget, that the God whom they serve is a jealous God, that even "our God is a consuming fire;" and that his jealousy, if it once wax hot, and begin to smoke against a man, will burn like the devouring flame. Let us learn to "fear that great and dreadful name, Jehovah our God," whose words of awful import to his ancient people are thus recorded by his prophet Malachi—"Ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith Jehovah. But cursed be the deceiver, who hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth to Jehovah a corrupt thing; for I am a great King, saith Jehovah of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen."*

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* His own favourite expression was, "Take a knife and cut a good slice off the loaf;" accompanying his animated tone—as was his custom—with corresponding action. These might, perhaps, be Mr. Fuller's own words. Such homely and familiar phrases, occasionally introduced in the free style of oral discourses, are not without advantage. They are adapted to strike the ear and command the attention at the time, and, consequently, to fix themselves in the memory afterward. They may be regarded as among those pointed sayings which "the Preacher" compares to goads and nails employed by wise teachers, "the masters of assemblies," in order to strike home and fasten important truths in the minds of their hearers. See Eccles. xii. 11.

If David, when commanded by God to rear an altar unto Jehovah in the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, refused to accept it as a gift from the owner, but determined to purchase at a full price, what he was willing to present; and in reply to his generous proposal—to give not only the floor, but also the oxen and threshing instruments for the sacrifice—said, "Nay, but I will surely buy it of thee; neither will I offer burnt offerings unto Jehovah my

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* Malachi i. 13, 14.

God, of that which doth cost me nothing;"* oh, how can Christians, who live under the more expansive and generous economy of the Gospel, content themselves with offering to God—for the promotion of his glory, and the advancement of his cause—that which involves no exercise of self-denial on their part, no sacrifice of ease, comfort, or even luxury? Surely "these things ought not so to be." They are "for a lamentation, and," so long as they continue, "shall be for a lamentation."

Dr. Philip bears the following testimony to the effect of this discourse, as having given a permanent direction to my father's views on the duty of Christians to distribute largely and liberally; and led to a determination on his part, in dependence on Divine grace, to carry them out into practical operation in future life. The following are his words:

"It is a feature in the character of human nature which is common to the world, and to the church, that the capabilities of men are often concealed from themselves and others, till brought into notice by circumstances apparently incidental. A casual sermon or even a single expression uttered from the pulpit, or the press, or in conversation, by imparting a new light to the mind, or, what is more remarkable, giving new energy to a subject with which it was previously familiar, has frequently been known to lead a man to alter the whole course of his life.

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* 2 Samuel xxiv. 18—24.

"Thomas Wilson knew the obligation he was under to God and to his cause, before he became a public character; but it was not till he heard a sermon by Mr. Fuller from these words: 'Cast thy bread upon the waters,' &c., that he realised those obligations to their full extent, and resolved, in a humble dependence on Divine aid, to consecrate himself, his time, his talents, and his property to the Lord's service. Under that sermon he felt, for the first time, that what he had been doing for the cause of God did not amount to the self-denial enjoined in the text; and that it was his interest as well as his duty, not to content himself with the common standard of liberality, but to deny himself not only the luxuries of life, but also what may be deemed [by some] its necessaries."

Since the preceding pages were printed I have been favoured by one of his sons with a copy of Mr. Fuller's own notes of the sermon on Ecclesiastes xi. 1—4, which it appears was preached at Devonshire square meeting-house, London, March 4, 1795, "for the charity schools."* The reader will be gratified by an opportunity of perusing them at length :—

> "Solomon lived in times of great plenty; yet they had their poor, and the text proves a regard to them. Charity is here expressed by casting our bread on the waters—either in allusion to sowing seed, in some countries, on the water, or to express the improbability, according to a judgment of sense, of ever seeing it again.

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* Mr. W. C. Fuller. Had I seen this earlier, I should scarcely have ventured upon the paraphrastic remarks inserted in a previous page.

"I. Point out the duty recommended. In general it is—to do good with our property. Charity has been brought into disrepute by the superstitious motives of some; but the thing itself is right, and a great duty. The change of dispensation made no change here, except to increase it, [the obligation.] It is the glory of true religion, that it inspires and inculcates a spirit of benevolence. It is a religion of charity, which none other ever was. There never was a hospital built until Christianity built one. It is true there have been many since, and by people of the world, too; but they were provoked to it by Christians. This spirit is not peculiar to the New Testament. Deut. xv. 7—12. Christ went about doing good—he taught the doctrine (parable of good Samaritan)—he censured the Pharisees for setting it aside—he set the example to his disciples—and they abounded in it. It is no inconsiderable part of true religion to let our light shine before men. But more particularly—

"1. That with which we do good, must be our own. 'Cast *thy* bread.' As there are some who withhold more than is meet, so there are others who, from ostentation, give what is not their own.

"2. We are to do good liberally. 'Give a portion *to seven, and also to eight*.' It is a great obstacle to many, and a common objection—that cases are so numerous. This is true, and every person must judge, whether he ought to give to all. If not, he must select the most deserving and important, and those in his immediate circle. But the caution, '*Be not weary* in well doing,' is not given without reason.

"3. For the sake of doing good, we should deny ourselves. 'Thy *bread*.' It is a notion of many, that they are required to give only superfluities; but this is treating God and the poor with only a dog's portion—the crumbs, as it were, which fall from their table. 'Cast thy *bread* on the waters.' There is something wonderful in that passage—'Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that although he was rich, for your sakes *he became poor*,' &c. Deny thyself—especially in such times as these—of luxuries in eating, drinking, apparel, entertainments, appearance, &c. Emulate the churches of Macedonia, (2 Cor. viii.) whose deep poverty abounded to the riches of their liberality.

"4. We are to do good, notwithstanding discouraging appearances in providence. We must not regard wind and weather, but resemble the husbandman in sowing the grain. The work *must* be done—the corn *must* be sown, let wind and weather be what they may. 'Here is a cloud, (says one,) stay awhile. I am apprehensive of loss in this quarter and in that, and I may not have enough for myself.' Nay—but 'in the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand.' Give as the Lord hath prospered you; and leave another day or another year to take care for itself.

"II. Consider the motives by which this duty is enforced. The sum of them may be reduced to four things.

"1. The reward which awaits us. 'Thou shall *find* it again.' What we do for the poor is not thrown away, though it may seem to be so. It is sowing the seeds of immortality . . . . and if done right, we shall find it, though it may be 'many days' first. God so orders it, that merciful men meet with mercy in this life, and their children after them, (Ps. cxii. 2;) and who knows what ours may need? Or, if we never find it here, we shall find it in a dying hour . . . . . and still more at the judgment (Matt. xxv. 31—46.) The poor are Christ's receivers. Yea, it will add to our joy hereafter, else it could not be called 'laying up treasure in heaven.'

"2. The impending ills that threaten us. 'Thou knowest not *what evil shall be on the earth*.' Perhaps there never was a time when this motive would apply with greater force.

Covetousness would turn this to another use,—'We know not what we shall want, we must every one look to himself.' No! that which you now possess may be taken from you; fires may consume it, floods may sweep it away, enemies may invade it, or internal changes may strip you of your all. Who would have thought, a few years ago, of thousands of the opulent inhabitants of a neighbouring country being reduced to misery and want? The case of the French emigrants may be your case. The language of these providences is—'Do good while you have it in your power; by-and-by you may be unable.' These things should check our desires to lay up great fortunes for our children, to the neglect of present duty. We have sometimes heard the words of an apostle brought to justify such a course—'He that provideth not for his own,' &c., and we do not deny the duty, in moderation. But the spirit there censured is not improvidence, but covetousness—neglecting their aged relatives, and throwing them on the charity of others.

"3. The design of God in affording us what we have—not that it may be hoarded, but communicated. 'If the clouds be full of rain, they *empty themselves on the earth.*' Inanimate nature is brought in to provoke us. We are but stewards after all, and must give account of our stewardship.

"4. The near approach of death, when all our opportunities will be for ever at an end. The tree will soon fall, and as it falls, so it will lie. 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, in the grave, whither thou goest.'"

CHAPTER IX.

HIS DILIGENCE IN BUSINESS—PUBLIC ENGAGEMENTS—CONNEXION WITH RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS—SOCIETAS EVANGELICA—LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY—HOXTON ACADEMY.

"SEEST thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men:"* he shall emerge from obscurity, rise to honourable independence, and be advanced to dignity and preferment. "He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand; but the hand of the diligent maketh rich."† My father was by natural constitution quick, agile, and alert, and his early engagements in a London warehouse tended to promote those active and industrious habits, which business, especially as prosecuted in the great city, requires. He was prompt and punctual, dexterous and expert in all the various matters which demanded his attention. "Whatsoever his hands found to do, he did with his might;" with cheerful alacrity and ready dispatch. In one of his early letters he says, "I think it is to the credit of any man, being once embarked in a business (to use a sea term) to spread every sail, by that means sooner to arrive at the desired port." His habits were neat, nice, and exact. He early learned the valuable lesson conveyed by that homely proverb, "A place for everything, and everything in its place." Is not the same lesson also taught by the orderly manner in which the linen rollers which had enfolded our Saviour's body were laid by themselves, and the napkin that had been about his head was folded up in a separate place, within his deserted tomb?*

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* Proverbs xxii. 29.

† Proverbs x. 4.

While sensible of his duty to be active and diligent, he did not forget that it was "God who giveth men power to get wealth;" that "the blessing of the Lord it maketh rich," and that to wealth obtained by his blessing upon honest industry "he addeth no sorrow." What he gained, was honourably acquired by lawful and fair means—not deceitfully, by a lying tongue, or unjustly by fraudulent devices. His wealth was not "gotten by vanity, but gathered by labour"†—not acquired by rash and daring speculation—that headlong, eager haste to be rich, which never can be innocent, but by patient labour. Riches thus obtained by persevering industry are much more safe and honourable than the treasures suddenly and hastily gotten by those who are bent upon being rich at all hazards, and have not patience to wait the process of gradual increase, and slow accumulation. My father was content to rise and get forward by means of the homely old-fashioned virtues, industry and frugality.

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* John xx. 6, 7.

† Prov. xiii. 11, "Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished, but he that gathereth by labour shall increase."

In 1796 he entered in his memorandum book the following, among other extracts, from the Life of Dr. Franklin—that eminently wise man.

"Be studious in your profession, and you will be learned. Be industrious and frugal, and you will be rich. Be sober and temperate, and you will be healthy. Be in general virtuous, and you will be happy.

"Life is a kind of chess. By playing at chess we may learn :—1, Foresight ; 2, Circumspection ; 3, Not being discouraged by present bad appearances in the state of our affairs, the habit of hoping for a favourable change, and that of persevering in the search of resources.

"To a young tradesman time is money, credit is money. The good paymaster is lord of another man's purse. The most trifling actions that affect a man's credit are to be regarded. Wealth depends upon industry and frugality.

"The use of money is all the advantage there is in having it."

My father was enabled to preserve an unblemished reputation both as a man and as a trader. The honour of the family was not sullied or tarnished by being transmitted through his hands, for he followed the example set by his own father of unstained virtue and strict integrity. His partner, also, was a man of high moral principle, conscientiously upright in all his dealings. The late Mr. John Wilson, his cousin, but many years older than himself, was always treated by him with that respect to which he was well entitled, and also with becoming deference as the senior partner. This worthy relative, whom he justly describes in one of his letters as "a sensible and good man," rose to honourable distinction in the church of Christ, being appointed, in 1796, manager of the Tabernacle and Tottenham court chapel, on the death of Daniel West, Esq., in conjunction with the late Samuel Foyster, Esq., and retaining that office till his death, January 15th, 1826, in the 75th year of his age.*

It appears, from the neat and accurate manner in which my father, during the earlier portion of his mature life, kept his private accounts, (in later years he was less exact,) that he had a mind, if not naturally adapted, yet capable of adjusting itself to the details of ordinary life. But this quality, good and valuable in itself, is not altogether conducive to the formation and developement of a manly and vigorous character. The tendencies of business, and of the habits which it induces, are to form—as in too many instances, when unchecked, they actually do form—the mere keen-eyed accountant, the cautious calculator, the accurate observer and attentive reckoner of profit and loss, the nice adjuster of the various items of a balance-sheet. A mind habitually conversant with the details of the desk and the counting-house is, to say the least, placed in an unfavourable position for taking general and comprehensive views. My father escaped this danger; in him this tendency was successfully counteracted.

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* Oct. 18, 1796, my father writes, "Mr. Wilks preached an excellent sermon, on account of the death of Mr. West. He not only lived well, but died rejoicing only in the blessed Saviour." The same excellent minister preached a sermon on the death of Mr. John Wilson from 2 Kings ix. 11, "Ye know the man and his communication;" making an appeal, with confidence, to that "great congregation" as a body of witnesses competent to speak from their own knowledge concerning one who "had a good report of all men, even of the truth itself."

God gave him a large soul. If he did not possess what is generally called a philosophical mind, yet certainly he had a noble, expanded, and generous heart. He was, by nature, one of those "liberal souls" whom no circumstances in which he might have been placed could pervert into a niggard, a churl, a mere money-scraper—the most contemptible of all characters—or an extravagant, selfish spendthrift. True is that aphoristic saying of George Herbert:

> "Never was scraper brave man."

And equally true is the converse,

> "Never was brave man scraper."

Yet he was preserved from the opposite extreme; for alas! our frail nature is ever prone to go astray, either on the right hand or the left. He was not a daring and adventurous tradesman, reckless of consequences, but cautious and prudent; looking forward to the future, "guiding his affairs with discretion." He acted like "a wise man, whose eyes are in his head," who proceeds with circumspection, "looks well to his goings, and ponders the path of his feet," as one walking in the midst of snares, and exposed to danger from various quarters. Deeply sensible of his need of the "wisdom that is profitable to direct," he lifted up his heart continually to that gracious God, his heavenly Father, who "giveth wisdom, out of whose mouth cometh knowledge and understanding," the Father of lights, who, if any one lack wisdom, and ask it of him with unwavering faith, giveth liberally without upbraiding. Yet he well knew that there are higher moral qualities and more important duties than the mere virtues that go to make up an honest, upright, and prudent trader. While diligent in business he was also fervent in spirit, and actively and diligently employed at such intervals of time as he could command in "serving the Lord." He acted as one who knew and felt that he was not his own, being bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot—an immaculate sacrificial victim—self-devoted for his redemption; and, therefore, "bound to glorify God with his body and spirit," as belonging not to himself, but to that great Master in heaven, whose he was, and whom he served. He was persuaded "by the mercies of God to present his body a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable," which he felt and acknowledged to be "his reasonable service." This enlarged and truly Christian state of feeling is not to be ascribed entirely to the effect produced upon his mind, by the sermons of Mr. Fuller. For many years before his father's death in March, 1794, he had been a member of the committees of several religious and benevolent societies. He felt a deep concern for the spiritual interests of his native country, and gave a portion both of his time and money to promote the spread of evangelical instruction in dark and destitute districts. He was chosen to succeed his father as Treasurer of the Societas Evangelica, having probably been many years previously a member of the committee ; and he was not an inactive, or merely nominal member, but a regular attendant at its meetings—acting as one who felt a lively interest in the object, and was willing to labour and suffer inconvenience in order to promote it. He gave himself to this work, as indeed he did to every other, like one who was really in earnest.

June 1st, 1793, he writes to my mother, then in Manchester, where the individual mentioned was expected shortly, "Yesterday I received a letter from Mr. Cockin respecting a minister's application for itinerating, &c. Please give my kind respects to him, and thank him for his letter, which shall be attended to, though I may not be in town at the next monthly meeting of the society."

The following extract from another letter, dated May 24, 1794, will show my father's earnest concern that the Gospel might be preached in all its purity and power, through the whole length and breadth of his native land.

"Last night we voted £20 at the Castle and Falcon for the associated ministers in Warwickshire, to assist them in maintaining two ministers to itinerate throughout the whole county, in every dark hole and corner. *When shall this be extended throughout the kingdom?*"*

It appears from this letter that about the time of its date my father's time was fully occupied, and his physical strength tasked to the utmost.† He perhaps fell into the not uncommon mistake made by young men of active and ardent minds—of dissipating their time and strength in too great a variety of public engagements. Probably more real service is rendered to the cause of God by a person who, making a judicious selection of one, or at the most, of two or three societies, devotes his time and energies to these, than by another who undertakes actively to assist a great number of objects. Nothing is more harassing and exhausting than the practice of attending several committees in succession on the same day. The religious world might, in this respect, learn a useful lesson from the political economists, who better understand the great advantages resulting from that principle, called 'the division of labour.' I am not informed to how many or to what particular committees he belonged; but in later years he confined his attention to a few, and devoted himself chiefly to the interests of one important institution.

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* High honour is due to these associated ministers, who, at a meeting held at Warwick June 27, 1793, requested the late Dr. Edward Williams, then of Birmingham, to draw up a circular letter, in order to excite Congregational ministers and churches to greater efforts for the efficient discharge of what they truly represent as "the duty of all Christians to employ every means in their power to spread the knowledge of the Gospel *both at home and abroad.*" The circular letter was presented and adopted at a meeting held Aug. 6, and means were ordered to be taken for giving it circulation when printed. It was resolved, January 8, 1794—"That the first object of this Association be to engage and employ two itinerant preachers for this county." See Memoir of Rev. George Burder, pp. 156—158.

† "What with attending to the executorship [under his father's will] —attending to my own and other cash accounts—business in the warehouse, and committees of religious societies, I find at times more upon me than my head can well bear. A little relaxation would be of service, though it does not seem practicable at present. The news from the Continent is so important that it must have some attention, together with the debates in both Houses of Parliament." [May 24, 1794.]

In the early part of the year 1795 my father's attention was directed to the subject of missions to the heathen. I find in his memorandum books for that and the following year copious extracts from the published journals of the Moravian missionaries in North America and Greenland. His mind appears to have been deeply impressed with these narratives, and he was evidently prepared to take a leading part in the great movement about to be originated—the glorious effort, on the part of several orthodox denominations in England, for the world's conversion. He was not one of those who doubted, and hesitated, and stood aloof, waiting to see who supported, who opposed, and to form some judgment whether or not the attempt might prove successful, before committing himself to it; much less did he frown or look coldly on the noble undertaking. On the contrary, he at once gave it his unqualified approbation and hearty support, well knowing that it was in full accordance with his Lord's will that his Gospel should be preached in all the nations.

Mr. Wilks had preached a sermon at the Tabernacle on the 13th of September, from Galatians iv. 18: "It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing," urging the members of that congregation to ardent zeal for the cause of missions, accompanied with courage, prudence, and constancy, and manifested by fervent prayer and pecuniary liberality. Of this discourse, which was introductory to the more public meetings, my father has preserved short notes, which are concluded with this remark: "Money given to this cause will prove the best spent guineas [laid out] in your whole lives."

As the initiatory proceedings were taken at meetings consisting exclusively of ministers, my father could not be one of the very earliest *active promoters* of this good and great cause; but he had the honour to be one of the 'Fathers and Founders' of the society now called the London Missionary Society. He probably attended the preliminary meeting held in the large room at the Castle and Falcon, September 21, 1795, and some of the subsequent public services; but at the meeting for business held in Haberdashers' hall meeting-house on the 23rd, he was nominated and chosen one of the first twenty-five directors of the society then formed and organised, and his name appears in the earliest list of contributors as having presented a donation of £100.*

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* Ellis's History of the London Missionary Society, vol. i. pp. 23—28. In the list of Directors inserted in the Evangelical Magazine for November, p. 468, appear the names of three members of the

It is an interesting fact, that the formation of this society for the conversion of the heathen abroad was the means of producing a revival of the effort to rescue from impending perdition "the heathen at home," and particularly of renewed and increased exertions for the spread of the Gospel in the dark villages and hamlets of Britain. The Evangelical Society had, for several preceding years, been in a declining state; but in January, 1796, measures were taken to promote its increased efficiency. At the general meeting, held February 5, about twenty new subscribers were added, the plan of the society was modified, and its rules were revised. Among the resolutions then adopted was the following:

> "That such County Associations as are united to promote the spread of the Gospel, be informed by the Secretary, that this Society do highly applaud their benevolent designs, and are ready to co-operate with and assist them, to the utmost of the Society's finances, where it may appear necessary."*

It appears, by the report of the committee presented to the subscribers in January, 1796, that the alteration thus made in one of the rules had operated so beneficially, that ministers in the country had been excited to extend and increase their labours; and

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Wilson family—his cousin's, his own, and his brother's; two of them—his partner and himself—filling official stations—

John Wilson, Esq., Islington, *Chairman.*
Thomas Wilson, Esq., Wood street, *Deputy Chairman.*
Joseph Wilson, Esq., Milk street.

Both the other gentlemen also gave donations of £100.

* EvangelicalMagazine for 1796, pp. 119, 120.

villages to the number of 116 had been provided with evangelical instruction by ministers under the patronage of the society, whose labours had been attended in many instances with the effectual blessing of God. The services of a permanent and stated itinerant had been engaged. This person, Mr. William Norris, proved a diligent and useful labourer in the North riding of Yorkshire and in the county of Durham, and the work of home evangelisation appeared to be steadily and progressively advancing.

One of the most important services rendered by this society was the encouragement thus held out to the formation of County and District *Associations for the Spread of the Gospel*, which was followed by very beneficial results, as the following extract from the report will show :

> "Many ministers, during the last year, have been stirred up to imitate the zealous example of their brethren by *associating* for the purpose of spreading the Gospel, both by their personal ministrations, and by the labours of itinerant preachers in their own counties."*

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* Evangelical Magazine for 1797, pp. 118, 119. Several societies were formed in different parts of the country, in 1796, or within a year or two afterwards, for the support and encouragement of itinerant preaching. A striking instance of the healthy re-action produced by the newly-awakened zeal for foreign missions, upon home operations, occurred in the association of the Hampshire ministers, which was begun in 1783. At a meeting held May 4, 1796, a communication was made, through one of the ministers, that "a gentleman in London (I believe Mr. Welch) from the time of the missionary meeting in September, 1795, had thought that, as we are desirous of sending the Gospel to the heathen, we should likewise be solicitous of sending it to the towns and villages where it is not preached, and that if two suitable

The Society continued in vigorous operation for several years after this period; my father continuing to fill the office of treasurer, and to take an active and leading part in its committee.

In October, 1797, my father accompanied the late Rev. Matthew Wilks and the late Rev. John Love, foreign secretary to the (London) Missionary Society, to Falmouth. The object of this journey was to obtain an interview with three missionaries who had then recently sailed from London. Expedition being important, they travelled in post-chaises night and day without stopping—except to change vehicles and horses, and to snatch hasty refreshment by the way. The business was considered so urgent that they did not rest even on the Sabbath, although devotional exercises were performed as they travelled. My father thus wrote, on their arrival, to my mother:

"Falmouth, 31st October, 1797. (Tuesday) I am sure you will feel anxious to hear from me, as this journey of nearly three

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persons could be found who would itinerate for that purpose in Hampshire, he would defray all their expenses." Thanks were voted for this "noble and Christian proposal," and the ministers undertook to "seek for two suitable persons, and to render them all the assistance in their power." April 5, 1797, after the ordination of Mr. James Bennett (now DD.) at Romsey, the Rev. Dr. Bogue, one of the principal founders of the London Missionary Society, "called a meeting of the ministers and brethren present to take into consideration a plan for spreading the Gospel through every part of Hampshire, who resolved to form themselves into a society for that purpose." "From this time (says Dr. Bennett) the propagation of the Gospel at home became the grand object of the Hampshire Association, which had long existed as a friendly meeting of the Independent ministers of the county, to promote kind intercourse among the different churches."—Memoirs of Dr. Bogue, p. 203.

hundred miles was not only sudden, but formidable. However, through the great kindness of our covenant God, we were brought in safety to this place. We have great reason to be thankful for preservation from evil.

"We have inquired about the missionary ship, but cannot find that it has been here yet. We hope it may come to-morrow; but I confess I think it uncertain whether we shall meet with them [the missionaries] or not. However, we must leave it with our Lord to direct. I hope some good end will be answered by this journey, though we may not yet see in what way. I hope this will find you and our dear children well. I trust the Lord will bless and preserve you all, and grant us a happy meeting again. I feel my own insufficiency for this journey, and for almost everything. O that I may get more knowledge of divine things, as well as obtain increased acquaintance with mankind, and with a part of our own country! Devonshire is a fine county, to which I shall now be better able to introduce you." *

"Gosport, 6th November, 1797.—We have proceeded thus far on our way home in safety, though much fatigued with travelling all night since we left Falmouth. We have been round by Plymouth, and have come to this place expecting to find the ship. However, to-day we have heard from Falmouth that while we were there, it passed in the night. So we are now satisfied that we have done all we could do—not doubting but God will overrule all for his glory. Mr. Wilks preaches to-night for Mr. Bogue, and to-morrow we set off for home. O that we may, if permitted to meet, enjoy much of the presence of God with us, and live as those who are born to inherit eternal glory!"

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* It was not until the summer of the year 1818, that my father did introduce my mother and his children to the scenery of this beautiful county.

My father returned home in improved health, notwithstanding they had travelled the whole of five nights out of nine. The journey cost £45, which he defrayed in full, without making any demand on the funds of the Society. It appears not to have been a wisely concerted expedition, as it certainly led to no practical result in reference to its specific object, but it probably served to give my father enlarged views.

One of his ministerial friends at this time was the late Rev. John Saltren, of Bridport, on whom the travellers made a hurried call on their way, and from whom he received a letter early in the next year, of which the following are extracts:

"*Bridport, January* 15, 1798.

"My dear Sir,—I wish you and yours a happy new year; or in other words, that 'Grace and peace may be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.' The consideration that we are *a full year* nearer the eternal world than we were on the first of January, 1797, should make us more active this year in the service of our God, not knowing but it may be our last.

"We were greatly disappointed in not seeing you and our brethren, Wilks and Love, in your way back to London. . . . I find by a letter just received from secretary Shrubsole * that your journey to Falmouth did not succeed as you expected.

"You and Mr. Wilks mentioned at my house an intention of sending a missionary into Cornwall. I hope nothing will make you relinquish that good intention. No people are more disposed to hear the Gospel than the inhabitants of that county.

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* The late William Shrubsole, Esq., of the Bank of England, who was chosen the first Home Secretary of the London Missionary Society. A memoir of this excellent man—one of my father's valued friends and steady coadjutors, may be found in Dr. Morison's "Fathers and Founders" of that Society.

"Dr. Hawker, of Plymouth, goes on well in his Master's work. I find by a letter received from a friend, that the Bishop [of Exeter] has begun to interfere with his preaching in a parish church, a few miles from Plymouth. How it will end I know not. . . . . . Your affectionate and obliged,

"JOHN SALTREN."

On the death of my grandfather in March, 1794, my father was unanimously chosen by the subscribers to the Evangelical Academy, to succeed him in the office of treasurer. He had been, from the year 1786, a member of the committee,* and had, with much regularity, attended its meetings. The interest which he felt in this institution increased as he advanced in life. He saw its importance in a clearer and stronger light, appreciated its value more highly, and at last determined to consecrate his life to its service. In so doing, he felt that he should render most efficient service to the spiritual and eternal interests of his countrymen.

I have now lying before me several folio sheets—being brief printed reports of the academy, accompanied by a statement of its plan, and mode of proceeding in the admission of students. The first of these, issued in January, 1794, distinctly states the great object for which the institution was founded, and the peculiar honour to which its founders and chief supporters — especially its new treasurer—aspired, of making it not only an evangelical, but also, in the strict and proper sense of the word, an evangelising institution. After some introductory remarks on the value of a Gospel ministry—the greatest blessing with which a nation can be favoured, being the grand means which the great Head of the church, in every age, employs, in accomplishing the most important of all works, the salvation of sinful men—and on the great desirableness that persons should enter upon it with all the advantages best calculated to command respect to their sacred office, and to render them acceptable and successful in the discharge of its various duties—reference is made to the success which had attended the seminary in preceding years.

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* The first meeting at which it appears from the minute-book that he attended, was held at Coles' Coffee-house, where, for many years, the committee met.—June 10, 1786.

"It has already furnished thousands with faithful, laborious, and useful ministers. Many applications have been made to it in the course of the past year by vacant congregations, three of which have been provided with pastors, and three or four are waiting till some of the students have completed their course. The Society, however, wish not only to provide for destitute churches, but, desirous of being more extensively useful, to introduce the Gospel, and to establish it where it has not been preached in the memory of man, and to spread far and wide the knowledge of salvation by Jesus Christ; well knowing, that 'where no vision is, the people perish.' Must it not be a painful reflection to the friends of pure and undefiled religion, that in many places, the most fatal errors, the most abominable vices, and the grossest ignorance prevail? Do the indigence, miseries, and temporal wretchedness of mankind, wound our feelings, excite our compassion, and compel us, as it were, to contribute to the relief of their necessities? and can we be in the least degree solicitous for the honour of God, the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, the present and eternal felicity of millions of our fellow-creatures, and not feel the strongest desire to contribute to the accomplishment of such noble ends?

"Having, then, embarked in so momentous a cause, ought we not to show a *distinguished* and *ardent* zeal, to animate and encourage others, to unite with and to assist us? For our greatest exertions must prove inadequate to accomplish our own wishes, and to answer the expectations of the religious public, unless the friends of the Gospel come forward and aid our undertaking."

An appeal is made, in conclusion, to the lovers of evangelical truth of all denominations, all who love the Redeemer and his cause, to co-operate in this important design, founded on the well-known fact that the institution was of a catholic character, not intended "to promote party schemes, but to advance the general interests of religion."

The following statement will show the views of the committee at this time as to the qualifications to be required of candidates, and the precautions to be taken in order to secure them.

"Great care is taken by the Society, that no student be admitted but of evangelical sentiments, possessed of good natural abilities, and who has, in the judgment of charity, experienced the power of Divine grace upon his own heart. After every precaution, if the candidate give satisfactory evidence of his real piety, he is put upon two months' trial; at the expiration of which term, if approved by the tutor, he is fully admitted.

"The Society, sensible that every pious person who wishes to enter on the Christian ministry is not endowed with gifts necessary for the discharge of the important services of the sanctuary, request that ministers and churches who may recommend young men to their patronage, would require them to engage in some religious exercise, public or private, as may seem most eligible, that they may have an opportunity to know whether the persons they recommend be possessed of promising abilities, as well as of real piety."

The report for the next year (1794) contains the following reference to the recently-projected Missionary Society:—

"It has been some time in contemplation to evangelise the *heathen* nations. A noble, a God-like design! and which will, we trust, meet the approbation and have the support of Christians of every denomination. But while we are attempting to promote so glorious a work in *distant* lands, let us not neglect the cultivation of our vineyard at home. Are there not many places in Great Britain whose inhabitants are perishing for lack of knowledge—are under the influence of the most pernicious errors—are guilty of the most abominable vices? And shall we not strain every nerve to rescue them from their miserable bondage, and endeavour to 'turn the wilderness into a fruitful field?'"

The report for 1796 (that for 1795 is wanting) contains the following passages:—

"The great Dr. Owen justly observes, 'No men in the world need help so much as those who are destitute of the Gospel; and of all kinds of distress, the want of the Gospel cries loudest for relief. He that is without the Gospel wants everything that can do him good. Wealth without the Gospel is but fuel for hell. Advancement without the Gospel is but climbing high to suffer the greater fall. All mercies without Christ are bitter; and every cup is sweet that is seasoned with a sense of his love. He is the author and finisher of our salvation; therefore he that hath not him, hath neither the beginning of good, nor shall have the end of misery.' Of what infinite importance is it, then, to disseminate the saving knowledge of him in the way which God hath appointed, viz., by the preaching of the Gospel! As the harvest is very great, and the faithful labourers are comparatively few, should we not fervently pray that the Lord of the harvest would send forth labourers into his harvest; such whose hearts are glowing with love to Christ and souls, and who are willing to sacrifice their ALL to be instrumental in turning sinners from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God? That *this grand object might be obtained*, the Evangelical Academy was originally instituted in 1778; and, by the blessing of God, it has since been attended with considerable success. Many who have been patronised by it, have, we trust, been not only useful in their stated labours, but also in conveying the light of Divine truth into the circumjacent villages.

"We are happy to learn that there are other fountains in the midst of the garden of God which send forth their fruitful streams in various directions. Many who have experienced their salutary effects have been brought to the knowledge of the truth, and encouraged to engage in the sacred work of the ministry, who, to all human appearance, would otherwise never have had the opportunity, or must have laboured under the greatest disadvantages. The indefatigable Mr. David Brainerd, who was so remarkably useful among the heathen, when about to leave his native country, began to think which way he might spend the little property he had, most to the glory of God; and no way presenting itself to his thoughts more eligible, than by educating some young men for the ministry, of good abilities, and truly pious—accordingly he made choice of a person for this important purpose. And while we are concerned for the spread of the Gospel in distant parts, let us not neglect to exert ourselves at home."

My father's efforts were, from the time of his accepting the office of treasurer, specially directed to the important work of increasing the number of annual subscribers. In the first printed report (for 1793) the names occupy only the third side of the folio sheet; but the lists for several following years, containing many additional names, gradually extend over a larger portion of the sheet. Some of these new subscribers were probably obtained through the influence of other individuals, but the labour of inducing others to join in this good work was chiefly performed by the treasurer, and, as the following pages will show, with great success.*

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* The first printed list (for 1793) contains 346 names, and from a MS. list in my father's hand-writing it appears that upwards of sixty additional subscribers were obtained in 1794. The new names for the year following are upwards of seventy.

CHAPTER X.

HIS RETIREMENT FROM BUSINESS—CONTINUED RESIDENCE IN LONDON—DEVOTED ATTENTION TO THE CONCERNS OF THE ACADEMY—TESTIMONY OF DR. PHILIP—EXERTIONS TO PROMOTE THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF THE YOUNG.

My father quitted his connexion with business at Michaelmas, 1798, his chief inducement to this important step being a desire to promote more actively and efficiently the cause of God. Among the subsidiary reasons contributing to the result, he mentions that he found the close confinement to the warehouse during the greater part of the day, injurious to his health. It might naturally be supposed that, on quitting business, he would remove his residence from the metropolis, and retire with his family to one of the suburbs; or perhaps erect for himself a handsome house on some part of the farm-lands in Essex, which he had purchased in 1796. He might, indeed, have done much good in any part of the country to which he might have removed; but he felt a strong persuasion that the neighbourhood of Hoxton Academy was the place pointed out by Divine Providence for his future residence, as he had relinquished business engagements chiefly that he might devote himself more entirely to the duties of his office as treasurer, and consecrate his future life to the advancement of the general interests of that institution. He therefore continued to occupy the house of which, in March, 1797, he had purchased the lease—No. 16, Artillery place, near Finsbury square. This house, the windows of which at the back overlook a large piece of ground belonging to the London Artillery Company, is of moderate size, not more than sufficient to accommodate his family. On the ground floor in front is only one small room, which was used by my father as a place for carrying on his private and public concerns, and was generally called the counting-house, where he sat during great part of the day—devoting many hours to transact that which he had determined henceforth to make his business—" the happy, joyful business of *doing good*," and to which he attended with all the energy and vigour which he had learned and practised in his secular calling.

It was a great advantage to my father that, in addition to the practical character of his mind, he carried into his career of public usefulness, the active and energetic habits of the man of business. In this respect he had been trained in a good school, and had profited by the lessons of promptitude and despatch, order and regularity, which a well-conducted London warehouse is adapted to teach. I have reason to believe that business itself—at least that department of it in which he was engaged—had never been quite congenial to his taste. Having, therefore, as part of his training and preparation for future usefulness, continued in it long enough to derive some valuable instruction, he had happily no powerful inducement to devote to it the remainder of his vigorous years. His age was at this time under thirty-four.

He had not amassed a *large* fortune, and as an expensive establishment would have swallowed up the greater part of his income, he considered that *for him* such an establishment was virtually interdicted by the universal rule laid down by the apostle in reference to all real Christians: "*No one* of us liveth to himself." Some, indeed, there are who, while professing to abjure the world as the rival and enemy of God, do not practically deny "*all* that is in the world," but renouncing "the lust of the flesh," retain as lawful "the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life."* My father had "not so learned Christ." He had studied the character and meditated on the example of his Redeemer to better purpose. He knew and felt that he was the follower of One who "pleased not himself," who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many," and who has faithfully forewarned his disciples, that unless they are willing to follow him in the path of self-denial, he will not acknowledge them in that character. He determined, therefore, to economise his resources that he might be liberal in distributing to others; he retired, not to enjoy himself, or to minister to the enjoyment of his family, but that he might have more favourable opportunities to practise the lessons which he had learned from the example of his honoured father, and the impressive discourses of Mr. Fuller.

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* See 1 John ii. 16.

Neither did he retire to rest from labour, while he distributed what he could spare of the annual income derived from the property he had inherited or acquired, to the support and advancement of his Redeemer's kingdom. He did not seek rural retirement, or even "the peaceful shades of devotional seclusion." He was, indeed, a lover of the country, an admirer of natural scenery and rural objects, and there are passages in his early letters which show that his natural taste was for a retired mode of life.* He had, also, some taste for reading, and his memorandum-books, written during the few years previous to his leaving business, show that he redeemed time from that and from his other engagements to read books of considerable size. One of these, from which copious extracts are inserted in 1796, is Milner's History of the Church of Christ. But he did not retire to enjoy literary leisure, or luxuriate in reading for his own amusement, or even mental improvement; much less to enjoy inglorious ease and indolent repose. He felt that the season of labour had not passed; that, in fact, the true business of life, instead of being ended, was only just about, in good earnest, to begin; that the time to rest from his labours had not come, nor would arrive, till either the close of life, or the previous privation of strength. Having been prospered and blessed by God as a man of business, he felt bound, as a man of leisure, to devote his time and strength as well as his money, to the glory of that God whose he was, and whom he served. He, therefore, girded up the loins of his mind, and braced himself to a course of strenuous effort and laborious exertion, as one who felt—in the language of one of his last extracts (in 1799)—that "we must stretch every faculty in the service of our Lord."

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* As a specimen, the following passage may be quoted from a letter dated May 31, 1794: "I sometimes think, if it were the will of God, I should like a more retired life, or at least a country situation—aiming at simplicity and generosity."

My father was enabled to avoid a great error into which persons retiring from business often fall. They are too apt to consider themselves at liberty to live in a desultory, irregular manner—to suppose that they may pass the remainder of life without a fixed plan, a determinate scheme of action—the consequence of which is, they have no practical aim—no definite object of pursuit. My father formed his purpose advisedly, and arranged his plan deliberately. The object selected by him, is the greatest that can engage the attention or occupy the faculties of man, to which he had in previous years devoted a considerable portion of time, and to which he now determined to devote the whole of his remaining life. That object was USEFULNESS, which has been well designated "the very excellency of life."* He selected, too, that department of service which may be called the flower of usefulness—beneficence in regard to the spiritual and eternal interests of mankind. Charity to the soul—to adopt a quaint phrase of the Puritan divines—is the soul of charity. What nobler object can a man propose to himself, to what higher honour can he aspire, than to be employed, as an instrument in the hand of God, to rescue from eternal destruction the perishing souls of his fellow-men? An elegant writer of the last century uttered a noble sentiment and a great truth, (although rather in banter than in sober earnest,) when he said: "The saving of souls is the heroic passion of exalted spirits."* But to a Christian, what higher motive to engage in this glorious work can be presented than the inspiring words with which the apostle James concludes his epistle: "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."†

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* "*Usefulness* is the very excellency of life. No man in the real church of Christ liveth unto himself. Every true Christian is a tree of right-

There are three principal methods in which all Christians may promote and advance this greatest object, the saving of souls—praying, giving, labouring. All these methods my father determined vigorously to employ. He had long known the value and importance of prayer. I have no reason to believe that his regular devotional exercises were protracted to any

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eousness, whose fruits are good and profitable unto men."—Life of Rev. Henry Venn, M.A. 8vo. edit. p. 294.

* Lord Shaftesbury's Characteristics. † v. 19, 20.

great or unusual length, yet I doubt not they were fervent and importunate, as well as, in their general character, unselfish and benevolent. He knew that it is the will of God that "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men,"*—and as his heart's desire, so his earnest prayer for the whole human race, was that "they might be saved;" a prayer in precise accordance with the will of God, who "desires all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."† Nor did he lose sight of the Divine glory as the great object ever to be kept in view by Christians, even in their prayers. This appears to be clearly taught in that brief and comprehensive summary, commonly called the Lord's Prayer, wherein the petitions that occupy the first place after the invocation, are—"Hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven;" and the closing ascription—"Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever, Amen." He was one of "those who *say continually*, The Lord be magnified," and whose concern it is, "that God, *in all things*, may be glorified through Jesus Christ." This, indeed, should form the sum and substance, the beginning and the ending of a Christian's prayers—just because it ought to be itself the head and chief—as it will be the fulfilment and consummation of his wishes and desires. Most instructive are the sublime concluding words of the seventy-second Psalm—a psalm prophetically descriptive of the peaceful, benignant nature, universal extent, and perpetual duration of the kingdom of "one greater than Solomon"—David's Son and Lord: "Blessed be Jehovah God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things, and blessed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and amen. The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended."

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* 1 Tim. ii. 1.

† ver. 4.

My father well knew and deeply felt the position which he occupied as a steward and dispenser, not an owner or proprietor, of the manifold gifts of God's providential bounty; and that "it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful."* Having, therefore, formed his plan of life on a right principle, he determined to retain in his own hands the means, and to cultivate and improve, by constant exercise, the habit of liberal distribution; and that he might be able to do this more effectually, to moderate his desires for worldly accommodations, and to keep down his scale of expenditure.*

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* He writes, in 1801, "We are all the stewards of God, sent into the world to employ for his glory the riches and talents which he has put into our hands, and which are by no means our own." So thoroughly had he adopted the principle inculcated in the following passage from an excellent writer:—

"I did not esteem myself the richer at all for my multitude of riches. I esteemed no more given me than what was in a reasonable manner proportionable to my necessities, to my charge and dependence, and to the station I had in the world. All the rest I looked upon as none of mine, but my Master's. It was rather my burden than my possession; the more I had, the more was my care, and the greater the charge that I had under my hands, and the more was my solicitude to be a faithful steward of it, to the honour and use of my Master; but my part was the least that was in it. Indeed, I rejoiced in this, that my Master esteemed me wise and faithful, committing the dispensation thereof to my trust; but I thought it no more mine, than the lord's bailiff, or the merchant's cash-keeper thinks his master's rents or money his. And therefore, I thought it would be a breach of my trust to consume or embezzle that wealth in excessive superfluities of meat, drink, or apparel, or in advancing myself or my posterity to a massy or huge acquest." Sir Matthew Hale's Contemplations—'The Account of the Good Steward,' p. 312.

I shall here introduce an extract from Dr. Philip's notes concerning my father:—

"In the application of his wealth, he was not forgetful of his family, and he regarded his children as having a right to expect that he should transmit to them the original patrimony which he had received from his parents; but he considered that they had no right to find fault with him as to the manner in which he might spend his *income*. The following anecdote will show the principle on which his expenditure was regulated. One day, being inclined to take a long walk, he asked me if I had any objection to accompany him as far as Stoke Newington, where I might see the mansion once possessed by Sir Thomas Abney, in which Dr. Watts spent thirty-six years of his life. The mansion was then uninhabited, and the house and grounds were for sale. Having shown me, with a glow of feeling above his usual temperament, the room in which the Doctor studied and composed most of his invaluable works, the bed-room in which he slept, and the turret on the roof of the house where he used to sit and enjoy the fresh air and the surrounding scenery; I remarked, 'I am surprised you do not purchase this place, and come and live in it.' His reply to my remark was quite in accordance with his character, and furnished me with a useful lesson, which I have never since forgotten: 'I might purchase this place, and live in it,' was his reply; 'but the establishment it would require would consume all my income, and no worldly establishment would be a compensation to me for the pleasure I have in living within my income, that I may serve God with the surplus.'"*

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* The following passage is from the memoir of a clergyman published in 1842: "He said in his own gentle way, that he thought we were too apt to arrange our expenditure on a wrong principle; first to form our own plan of life, and then see what we can give to promote the cause of God; whereas, the first inquiry should be, out of what God has entrusted to us, *how much* can we give for the advancement of his cause and glory; and then to arrange our mode of life with the remainder." —Memoir and Remains of the Rev. Henry Vaughan, B.A., p. 103.

This fact shows my father's perspicacity and sound practical judgment, enabling him to discern the right line of duty in what is considered by some a difficult question of moral casuistry—May a Christian man adopt such a scale of domestic expenditure as will almost deprive him of the pleasure, and disqualify him for the duty of advancing the cause of God, and promoting the spiritual welfare of his fellow-men? This question resolves itself, in fact, into another: Is it lawful for a Christian to live in such a style as to leave no room for the exercise of self-denial, or sacrifice of ease, inclination, and self-indulgence, in order to do good to others? I believe it is *not.*

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* Dr. P. was admitted a student at Hoxton Academy in 1799. This circumstance probably happened several years afterward.

I do not mean to intimate that it is *unlawful* for a Christian man to possess a large house and estate, or even to purchase a splendid mansion, with park, plantations, and pleasure grounds—"to get him men-servants and women-servants," and to surround himself with "the delights of the sons of men." I think he may lawfully retain what of this kind may have descended to him from his ancestors, or may have been purchased with his own money; "provided always," that the cost of maintaining his family in what is deemed an appropriate style, and keeping up a corresponding establishment of servants and domestics, does not absorb the whole or the greater part of his annual income, so that he may truly be said to "consume it upon his *lusts*," (using that word in the sense of innocent—at least not forbidden desires,) and thus, in effect, disqualify himself from fulfilling the great duty of all rich men, "to do good, to be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate." If a man spend *all*, or *nearly all*, upon his family and servants, it must be put down to the account of Self & Co., but can he be justly considered a follower of Him who requires the denial of self as the very term of discipleship? Nor will the specious pretext avail—that he is in fact doing good, really conferring benefit on others by employing servants and workmen, and supporting, or paying them fair wages as a remuneration for their labour. This may be true, and yet his real governing motive, his actual ruling intention not being "to do good, and to communicate," it will not be accepted as one of those "sacrifices with which God is well pleased."* Nor can it even in the sight of men, be fairly placed to the account of real beneficence: much less in the sight of that God to whom we must render a strict account, and who "seeth not as man seeth," judging of actions by their motives and inward principles.

"If a man forsake not all that he hath," said Jesus,—whom we call the Teacher and the Lord,—"he cannot be my disciple. Not that he requires literally of all what he required of that young and amiable rich man to whom he said, "Go sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor;" but the terms laid down by himself elsewhere, are of universal application, and still remain in full force. The following words were addressed promiscuously to the great multitudes who on one occasion attended him. "Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. . . . . Whosoever he be *of you* that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."† The man who, after having calmly and deliberately counted the cost, consents not *practically* and heartily to *these terms*, is in great danger of becoming insipid salt—utterly useless and unprofitable, instead of being a portion of that pungent and powerful moral antiseptic, which is not only an antidote and preservative of the mass from putrescent corruption, but destined also ultimately to season and flavour the whole earth.*

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* Heb. xiii. 16. † Luke xiv. 27, 33. Compare ix. 23, and Mark viii. 34.

Although duty may not positively demand the selling of houses and lands, and other worldly possessions, yet, if love and inclination prompt a man to offer them a cheerful sacrifice, and God is pleased graciously to accept the free-will offering at his hands, he will be no loser, but a great gainer in the end. There is a *special* promise made to such persons in these words of our Saviour, "Every one that hath forsaken houses or lands for my sake, and the Gospel's, shall receive an hundred-fold in this present time, and in the world to come shall inherit life everlasting."† If a cup of cold water given to a disciple in the name of a disciple shall in no wise lose its reward, surely the individual who relinquishes and resigns all that the world deems most valuable, for the sake of Christ—in order to promote his cause, and the propagation of his Gospel—will receive at his hands a distinguished, although a gracious recompense.‡

My father had been led, under the guidance of

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* See verses 34, 35, and compare Matt. v. 13.

† Matt. xix. 29. Mark x. 29, 30.

‡ A noble instance of the voluntary abandonment of a beautiful domain for Christ's sake and the Gospel's occurred about fifty years ago, when the late Robert Haldane, Esq. "sold the estate of Airthrey, near Stirling—a seat which a Scotch nobleman pronounced to be 'a perfect heaven upon earth,' and afterward lived in a [comparatively] recluse style, laying out thousands every year for the propagation of the Gospel in Scotland and Ireland! 'Oh (say the gentry) he must have some deep scheme in his head.' . . . . . . He is a great economist in order to be generous.' Memoirs of Rev. Andrew Fuller, by the late Dr. Ryland, 1816, p. 304.

Divine Providence, to form right views of human life, and of the present state as a scene of labour, not a place of rest. He heard the voice of God, his heavenly Father, addressing him, "Son, go work to-day in my vineyard—work while it is day, the night cometh wherein no man can work;" and he promptly replied: "I go, Lord," and immediately went—determined by the help of God to be "in labours more abundant;" to be "stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord," assured that his labour would not be in vain in the Lord. By persevering constancy in a course of beneficent action he sought true, imperishable honour; "the honour which cometh from God only."

As already mentioned, he had not only been led to form a definite purpose, but also to select a specific object; and not for a single day, scarcely for a single hour, did he suffer his attention to be diverted from that object. He is a remarkable instance, in this respect, of steadiness and determined adherence to a resolution once deliberately taken. Not only was he continually employed in the work of the Lord, he was, also, continually occupied with "this one thing"—engaged in this one department of active service, which he publicly stated, many years afterward,* that he had selected, because he deliberately considered it as most conducive to the spiritual interests of his fellow-men, and thus to the glory of God as the God of grace and salvation.

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* At the annual meeting of subscribers to Highbury College in 1833, my father said "he considered the education of pious, devoted young men for the Christian ministry the most useful work in which we can be engaged, as lying at the foundation of all other means of usefulness."

I may also quote his own words in 1840: "During my father's life I felt much interest in this object, and when I undertook the office of treasurer, I determined to devote myself to its duties; and to do this more effectually, I gave up my connexion with business in the year 1798."

He not only set himself vigorously to procure new subscribers, and thus, by increasing the annual income, to augment the means of educating candidates, but also to obtain suitable young men, and to encourage those who were disposed to offer themselves, and yet were ready, through modesty or fear, to shrink back, when he discerned in them the requisite qualifications. Some of the most eminent individuals educated at Hoxton Academy entered as students under his auspices, and continued through his encouragement and advice. Of these I cannot forbear mentioning Dr. Philip, the liberator of the oppressed aborigines of Southern Africa, who has done nobly in the great cause of general philanthropy, as well as of Christian missions, and who, I trust, will pardon me for giving him a prominence to which, as a public benefactor of his species, he is well entitled. In a letter to my father, written during the Doctor's temporary residence near London, and dated June 13, 1829, he says:*

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* The reader will not require any apology for my inserting this letter at length, with the exception of a few words.

"To you I owe my introduction to the Christian ministry; and in making this acknowledgment I do not refer only to your connexion with Hoxton College, but to the particular circumstances under which I was introduced to that institution, when the door seemed to be shut against me, and to subsequent instances of your kindness, which it is unnecessary to specify.

"The few weeks which I spent in your family immediately after my arrival in London has always been recollected by me as one of the happiest circumstances in my life. The devotedness to God and to his cause, which I then witnessed in yourself and your esteemed partner in life, the advice and admonitions which I then received from you both, the condescension and tenderness which you then showed me . . . . . the Christian spirit with which you and Mrs. Wilson encouraged me when I was on the point of being overwhelmed, and giving up the intention of entering into the ministry, from a sense of my own deficiencies, together with all the delightful and profitable intercourse I have since had under your own roof and with the various branches of your beloved family, are still fresh in my mind, and will remain so till it is our privilege to meet in the kingdom of our heavenly Father.

"The reference which you have made to the success with which God has been pleased to crown my humble labours in favour of the aborigines of South Africa, brings to my recollection the remark of the great Theban general,* when he was congratulated on his success after the battle of Leuctra: 'It gives me pleasure,' he replied, 'that I have a mother to enjoy the reputation of her son.' My mother has been some years in heaven, and while she lived it was one of the greatest earthly pleasures which I derived from any little reputation I then had bestowed upon me, that she was alive to enjoy it.

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* Epaminondas.

"I can now say, separate from the good which may have attended my humble exertions, it is one of my greatest pleasures, that my early patrons and best friends at Highbury live to see one who owes them everything, blessed with the measure of usefulness which has arisen out of his poor labours. It must be very consoling to you, my dear Sir, under your labours and privations for the cause of God, to look to Africa and to see what has been effected for the natives of that country by one who would never probably have been known in the church or in the world, but for your liberality and exertions. And that pleasure must be greatly augmented when you recollect that I am one only of many who are in relation to you in similar circumstances with myself. The bare reputation of doing good is nothing; it is in the good done by our instrumentality, and in the prospect of doing good, that we must seek for our happiness; and to this, the purest of all enjoyments, because it brings along with it a sense of the Divine approbation, you have a right to a large share. It has long been an opinion of mine, that reputation will do a man much harm, if it is regarded in any other light than as a talent put into his hand to enable him to do some good, or as a means of pleasure to his friends. I acquired this lesson at an early period of my ministerial labours. For a man to extract sweets from his own reputation is to attempt to live upon poison. The moment any feeling is cherished in the mind which has a tendency to generate self-complacency, a man's usefulness is at an end; his fellowship with God is interrupted; the seeds of pride and envy begin to germinate in his heart; and the whole character undergoes a transformation. There are, perhaps, few passages in the New Testament which have been more impressed upon my mind than the admonition of our Lord to the disciples, when they returned and told him that the very devils were subject to them. 'Rejoice not,' said he, 'in that, but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven.' The Christian motto is, Onward! He counts not as if he had already attained, or were already perfect, but leaving the things that are behind, he reaches forward to the things that are before."

It was greatly owing to my father's influence that, after he became treasurer, the number of students was year after year augmented. When Mr. Simpson entered upon the office of tutor at Hoxton in 1791, he had only three young men under his charge. In 1794 there were not more than thirteen. In 1798 the number had increased to twenty, in 1801 to twenty-five, and in 1803 to thirty.

He was in the habit of seeking out young men who appeared suitable, and encouraging them to offer themselves as candidates.*

An additional tutor was considered indispensably needful in 1797, and at Midsummer the Rev. George

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* A minister in the country thus writes: "I well remember the morning when your father, a stranger to me, called on me, engaged as I was in secular business, and asked me what I thought of the ministry. I told him I could entertain no idea of it with reference to myself. We conversed together; he removed some of my objections, and before leaving me, obtained a promise, that I would consider the matter. This led to my entering Hoxton College in 1802, and that was followed by my settlement in 1806, at . . . . . where I have resided ever since. I connect all the subsequent events of my life with that morning's interview, as having been materially influenced thereby."

Collison* was appointed to that office, which he filled with great efficiency till the spring of 1801, when various reasons induced him to tender his resignation, which the Committee unwillingly accepted, with a grateful acknowledgment of his valuable services.

The annual reports of the academy continue to bear the same missionary character as at first. That for 1798 contains the following powerful appeal:—

"The doctrine of the cross is, confessedly, the great means which infinite wisdom hath ordained to bring men to the saving knowledge of God, and to comfort and build up saints in faith and holiness. Ought not every person then who professes to love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth, to exert himself to spread the Gospel, and to diffuse the saving knowledge of his name? Is not every Christian indispensably bound to do this by his profession, the relation he stands in to his fellow-creatures, and especially his relation to Jesus Christ? Shall we not then *come to the help of the Lord against the mighty*, and endeavour to stop the progress of infidelity, and to stem the torrent of immorality? Shall we let our hand be slack, or withhold our support from a work in which the glory of God and the eternal happiness of men are so deeply concerned? Rather let us not relax our efforts, till every human heart become the throne of Jesus, and every human body a temple of the Holy Spirit.

"What can be more God-like than the attempt to rescue immortal souls from the tyranny of domineering passions, from the torture of a guilty conscience, and from endless misery?"

The report proceeds to state that not only had many congregations in various parts of the kingdom been supplied from this seminary, but also several congregations collected and churches formed. Much more of this kind was to be done in future years through the zealous efforts of the new treasurer.

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* Of this gentleman my father speaks in terms of high commendation in a letter dated October 18, 1796, to my maternal grandfather, announcing his being appointed to supply Mosley street Chapel, Manchester.

An urgent request is made for an increase of subscribers, a much larger supply of funds being necessary to meet the increased expenditure occasioned by the additional tutor and a greater number of students. "Without an augmentation of pecuniary means the Society will be under the disagreeable necessity of declining to receive some who may apply for admission, however promising their abilities." To avert this disagreeable necessity, the treasurer exerted himself nobly. He acted in the spirit of that command of the great Master: "The harvest is great, and the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth labourers into his harvest." He employed active means in order to the accomplishment of this great desire, and watched for opportunities of helping forward the fulfilment of his own prayer. Well did he improve the increased leisure afforded by his retirement from secular engagements; for in the year following, upwards of two hundred new annual subscribers—several of five guineas, and others of two and three—were obtained, chiefly, I have no doubt, through his personal efforts. The annual subscriptions which, in the year 1793, amounted to £368. 11*s*., had increased in 1798 to £556. 9*s*. In the year following they rose to £800, in 1801 to £968, in 1802 to £1047. 1*s*., in 1803 to £1171. 9*s*. 6*d*.; thus affording decisive proof how much the institution was indebted to its treasurer, who, in devoting himself to its interests, found the work of his hands, by the Divine blessing, prospered and established.

The reader will not be surprised to learn that the year of my father's retirement from business was the era of increased prosperity to the academy, and that under his auspices that institution continued to make steady progress.

In 1799, a new and extended lease of the premises having been obtained from Dr. Williams's trustees, a considerable enlargement of the college building was made in order to provide increased accommodation. The whole expense of repairs, alterations, and various improvements in the building, amounting to £430, was obtained principally through the exertions of the indefatigable treasurer. He also himself contributed £200, which was laid out in the purchase of beds for the students.

That my father's active and pecuniary services in behalf of the academy for several years after his entering upon the office of treasurer were not unappreciated, will appear by the following extracts from the minute book:

"December 12, 1794. A vote of the Committee passed to comply with the request of the students that the Encyclopædia Britannica might be purchased for the use of the academy; and at the general meeting held January 9, 1795, votes of thanks were passed to the treasurer for having presented that work to the Society, and also for his assiduous exertions and services rendered to the institution. At the general meeting, January 8, 1796, it was resolved, 'That the exertions of our treasurer entitle him to the warmest thanks of the Society for his past services, as well as to their future confidence.' At the general meeting, March 10, 1797, 'That the most cordial thanks of this Society be given to the treasurer for his generously paying for the repairs done at the academy house last summer, amounting to £60 and upwards.'* At the annual meeting, January 11, 1799, 'That the most cordial thanks of this Society be given to the treasurer for his very great services and liberality for the benefit of this institution.' After a statement made to the general meeting, January 10, 1800, of the amount of donations which he had received towards the expenses incurred by the repairs of the house, &c., (£279,) it was resolved, 'That the most cordial thanks of this Society be given to the treasurer for his increased liberality, and also for his great exertions on behalf of the academy.' "†

My father did not however confine his exertions to that which he had selected as his principal object. He took an active part in the formation, in 1799, of a Society intended to promote the more general diffusion of religious knowledge by means of the religious education of children.

A few extracts from a printed document will sufficiently explain its general nature and specific objects.

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* The amount was £65. 17*s*. 6*d*.

† Among the donations obtained by him, as reported from time to time in the minutes, are the following. In 1799, Henry Thornton, Esq., £10; William Wilberforce, Esq., £20; Charles Grant, Esq., £5. 5*s*.; David Dale, Esq., of Glasgow, £20; Robert Haldane, Esq., of Edinburgh, £22. 10*s*.: and in 1800, Admiral Gambier, £5. 5*s*.; Sir Charles Middleton, Bart. [afterwards Lord Barham] £5. 5*s*.

It is entitled "Address to the Religious Public, on the great importance of the instruction of youth in the principles of the Gospel, by a Society lately established for the sole purpose of promoting that great object."

"At present the condition of the rising generation among us is truly deplorable, notwithstanding the benefits that have resulted from the extensive establishment of Sunday Schools, consequent on the formation of the Sunday School Society about the year 1785. Great as these benefits are, there seems abundant room for addition to them, by engrafting upon them instruction more directly and fully religious and evangelical. Only the children of the poor are taught in these schools, while the spiritual instruction of the children of the middle ranks is, very frequently, totally disregarded.

"It was under a serious apprehension of this state of things that, in the year 1796, a few respectable individuals at Edinburgh commenced the 'Gratis Sabbath School Society, for the general religious instruction of youth in that city and neighbourhood.' These were taught chiefly on the Sabbath evening; and much good being done by it, similar Societies were formed in Glasgow, Perth, Dundee, Aberdeen, and most other towns in Scotland. In the year 1799, some pious persons in London, roused to activity by the example of their brethren in the north, formed this Society in London for the same important purposes.

"One of the first steps taken by this Society was to circulate a considerable number of an excellent tract, written by Mr. Bogue, at their request, entitled 'The Instruction of the Rising Generation in the principles of the Christian Religion recommended.' There is reason to hope that many were induced, by perusing this tract, to consider the subject more seriously than before, and that several schools were established in consequence of it.

"In consequence of the first and feeble efforts of this institution, several schools in and about the metropolis, and in various parts of the kingdom, have either been formed, or encouraged and promoted. Several schools of this kind are supported in the borough of Southwark, Wapping, Rotherhithe; at Kingsland, Buckby, Coventry, in Cumberland, and at Bristol. Some of these flourish beyond expectation; there is the most satisfactory evidence that some of the children have been truly converted to God, and there have been very gratifying instances of the power of Divine grace in the happy death of some.

"Encouraged by these pleasing events, the Society contemplates, with growing delight, instances innumerable of the same kind in years to come, if Christian ministers and pious parents, who peruse these lines, shall feel the glow of Divine love in their bosoms prompting them to immediate exertions on behalf of our dear youth .... The faithful, the laborious, the zealous minister of Christ's Gospel may, amidst his various studies and labours in season and out of season, have passed over this branch of the pastoral work."

The duty enjoined upon Christian ministers of feeding the lambs of Christ's flock was one of which the Puritan and early Nonconformist divines deeply felt the obligation. The paper from which the preceding passages are taken is concluded by a series of extracts chiefly from the writings of eminent ejected ministers on the great duty of imparting evangelical instruction to children and young persons by means of catechisms. That work was generally practised by the pastors of the Congregational and Presbyterian churches during the earlier portion of the last century, but it had long fallen into general disuse when this appeal was made. The modern custom, introduced in many of our churches,—borrowed, I believe, from our American brethren,—of communicating scriptural instruction in Bible-classes, is, in my humble opinion, "a more excellent way," than the method of teaching them to repeat human catechisms, which, however generally accordant they may be with the oracles of God—and one, at least, in very general use is not entitled even to this praise—are but "the words which man's wisdom teacheth." The great thing needed in order to the raising up of a godly seed, who shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation, is—that from their childhood they be taught the Holy Scriptures in those words which the Holy Spirit has indited, and which are able to make them wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. This good work, so far as it can be carried on in schools and classes, does not surely belong exclusively to ministers. What work can be more appropriate for devout and devoted women, especially pious matrons, than to be teachers of babes, the babes of those who are themselves ignorant and uninformed in the very principles of the oracles of God? But, certainly, this must be considered as the peculiar, imperative, and indispensable duty of enlightened Christian parents, especially of mothers, who are called by God to be the religious teachers of their own offspring at a tender age. How few men have risen to eminence in the church of Christ, who have not been trained and tutored in their early youth by mothers in whom dwelt the same unfeigned faith which Lois and Eunice were honoured to be the instruments of communicating through the Holy Scriptures, to the future evangelist, when he was a child ! *

The reader will, I trust, pardon my inserting here the following extracts from Baxter's Saints' Rest:—

" The very welfare of church and state lieth mainly on this duty of well educating children; and without this, all other means are like to be far less successful. I seriously profess to you, that I verily think all the sins and miseries of the land may acknowledge this sin for their great nurse and propagator. Oh, what happy churches we might have, if parents did their duties to their children! Then we need not exclude so many for ignorance or scandal, nor have our churches composed of members so rude! Then might we spare most of the quarrels about discipline, &c. Any reasonable government would do better with a well-taught people, than the best will do with the ungodly. It is not good laws and orders that will reform us, if the men be not good, and reformation begin not at home. . . . . The first work towards the reforming and making happy of church and commonwealth lies in the good education of your children. The most of this is your work; and if this be left undone, and then they come to ministers raw and ignorant, and hardened in their sins,—alas! what can a minister do? Whereas, if they came trained up in the principles of religion, and the practice of godliness, and were taught the fear of God in their youth,—oh, what an encouragement it would be to ministers, and how would the work go on in our hands! I tell you seriously, this is the cause of all our miseries and unreformedness in church and state, even the want of a holy education of children! . . . . Alas! how

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* 2 Tim. i. 5; iii. 14, 15.

long may we catechise them, and preach to them, before we can get them to understand the very principles of the faith! This, this is the cause of our churches' deformities, and this is the cause of the present difficulty of reformation. It is in vain to contend about orders and discipline, if the persons who are under it be not prepared.

"I do verily believe that if parents did their duty as they ought, the word publicly preached would not be the ordinary means of regeneration in the church, but only without the church, among infidels. God would pour out his grace so upon the children of his people, and hear prayers for them, and bless such endeavours for their holy education, that we should see the promises made good to our seed."

The author then proceeds to show the excellent advantages which parents have, above all others, for the saving of their children, of which the first he mentions, is—

"They are under your hands while they are young, and tender, and flexible. You have a twig to bind, and we [ministers] an oak."*

The address above quoted is concluded by an earnest appeal, which is thus introduced :—

"Apprehending as they do, with the illustrious Mr. Boyle, that no considerable reformation in the principles or manners of men can be expected, until the religious education of youth be more generally regarded, they will feel themselves inexpressibly honoured, if the circulation of this paper or any other means in their power, should excite in the religious world an active, affectionate, and immediate concern for the rising generation.

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* Edit. 4to. 1659, pp. 564—566. Mr. Baxter elsewhere says, "I doubt not that God usually blesseth godly education to be the means of real sanctification, before the public preaching of the word, to many, if not most of the children of those believers who *make conscience of that great duty*."—p. 135.

"But where shall *teachers* be found for these schools? It is, indeed, of the last moment that they be qualified for the arduous service. The grand, radical qualification is, that they be disciples of Christ."

Several classes of persons are then specified,—ministers of the Gospel,—private Christians of judgment and experience,—pious women,—young persons of both sexes,—rich disciples of Jesus, and such as hold eminent stations in the world. Persons belonging to these different classes are separately addressed, and urged to come forward in aid of this good work.

Among the officers of the Society, my father's name appears as secretary. He was not a person to take a prominent part in such a movement and to make such an appeal, while himself stood by, a mere idle spectator. He was prepared to apply his own energies vigorously to the work, as will appear by an extract from Dr. Philip's notes.

"In his zeal for the preaching of the Gospel, he did not overlook the importance of the rising generation; and the following anecdote will illustrate the interest he took in their religious instruction. In 1799, commiserating the moral and religious state of a large portion of the borough of Southwark, he resolved on doing something to collect the children of that district, and to try if Sunday-schools could not be established among them.* For this purpose a few of the respectable inhabitants were convened, at which meeting I happened to be present, when resolutions were passed; and it was agreed that one or two places should be rented for school-rooms, and a commencement should be made. The day on which the schools were to be opened was fixed upon; and it was settled, that the individuals present should visit the families of the poor, and, informing them of their object, request them to send their children to the schools, and to come along with them on the day appointed for opening them. I have seldom seen among the heathen, on the first introduction of a missionary among them, greater ignorance of divine things, or a greater appearance of indifference to the proposal of instructing their children, than was manifested by these people.

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* Probably schools for religious instruction on the Sabbath evenings are intended.

"Mr. Wilson not only engaged to visit the section of the district assigned to him, but he occasionally accompanied other visitors in their several sections, and continued to persevere in this self-denying work so long as it stood in need of his services. Not only did many of the parents treat him with the greatest incivility, but, in some instances, they demanded money to be given them, to allow their children to go to the school. After the first school had been established for some time, many of the mothers were in the habit of coming to the teachers and to Mr. Wilson, when he happened to visit the schools, to ask for money to purchase shoes, threatening at the same time to take them away should these demands not be complied with. For some months the children in attendance did not exceed from seventy to ninety. It was not, however, long before he was repaid for his labour and perseverance; for in 1802 I had the pleasure of addressing, in Surrey Chapel, nearly three thousand children, who were said to belong to these schools."

My father was not of so soft and pliable a temperament as to yield to the discouragements, or be deterred by the difficulties that might obstruct the path of usefulness. He knew too well the truth of the motto ascribed to Napoleon,—‘ Perseverance is the secret of success,’—and felt that success itself would be more honourable and more grateful, when obtained after patient toil and enduring conflict with opposition and resistance. He had also learned that great principle in the Christian school—“ Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”

Of the Society itself I am not able to furnish any farther information. It does not appear to have long subsisted in a separate form, and it probably attained its chief object by introducing or promoting an improved method of conducting Sunday-schools, which had previously been too much, although not exclusively, devoted to secular teaching.*

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* The other officers of the society were :—Treasurer, Robert Cowie, Esq. of Highbury place.—Committee, Rev. Rowland Hill, Rev. J. A. Knight, Wm. Alers, Esq., J. Reyner, Esq., Mr. Burchett, Mr. Joseph Tarn, Mr. T. Pellat. No list of subscribers is annexed. Mr. Alers (now W. A. Hankey, Esq.) is the only survivor.

I find in the Evangelical Magazine for 1799, the following account of the plan on which these schools were conducted.

“ Sabbath evening catechetical schools have been for some time established in the north; and some of the ministers who have lately visited those parts, have been so much gratified with the institution, that they have attempted to raise similar in England. Mr. Moseley, in particular, has formed two at Long Buckby, and has been the instrument of beginning three in the neighbourhood of London, viz., at Hoxton, Kingsland, and at the New Mulberry gardens Chapel. The effects have, in many instances, proved the plan to be calculated to promote the cause of vital religion. Many young persons have already been converted, and the parents of several, drawn by curiosity to hear their children, have also been brought to the saving knowledge of Christ.

“ Sabbath-schools differ materially from Sunday-schools. The latter

A vigorous movement has been made since my father's death, to promote general education in connexion with religious teaching; but, alas! much, very much yet remains to be done, before the pressing and urgent wants of our country in this respect can be adequately supplied. Oh! if it were possible to devise some unexceptionable means, and those means could be generally carried into practical execution, for conveying a purely scriptural Christianity in its genuine simplicity, apart altogether from human creeds and catechisms, to the homes and hearths of our entire population, and especially for conveying it to the heads and hearts of the youthful inmates of our smaller houses and cottages! Firmly am I persuaded that a religious reformation among us must commence in the nursery, and that, if the next generation is to be seasoned and imbued with evangelical knowledge and genuine piety, the tincture must be imbibed almost with their mothers' milk. Alas! that in the higher

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are principally designed to teach children to read; the object of the former is religious instruction only. Sunday-schools are for the poor; these are equally intended for the offspring of the rich.

"These exercises are chiefly conducted by gentlemen and respectable tradesmen. No children are admitted under the age of eight years, nor any who cannot read. They generally meet on Sabbath evenings. The exercises begin with requesting of some an account of the texts and sermons heard through the day. A short portion of Scripture is repeated, which had been appointed on the previous Sabbath; and in a familiar manner the teacher endeavours to draw forth the ideas of the children," &c.—pp. 480, 481.

"A society for conducting Sabbath evening schools was formed at Berwick-upon-Tweed, for that place and the neighbouring villages, July 21, 1798."—See Evangelical Magazine for 1800, p. 81.

walks of society the great object in the education of young females—imparting to them such solid and useful, above all, such religious and scriptural instruction as may qualify them to become teachers of their own future offspring—should be so generally lost sight of amid the dazzling glare of those showy and superficial *accomplishments* which have hitherto been too much the bane, not only of " the world of the ungodly " without, but also of what is too significantly called *the religious world* within the pale of the professing church! To view woman in the true light of her high destiny—to see what constitutes her true glory and distinction, and invests her with an almost sacred character, when raised to her proper elevation as the *first* teacher, and therefore the *real* trainer of the future race—has been hitherto the rare and extraordinary attainment of a few enlightened and highly-gifted minds. Could effectual measures be adopted to elevate the general standard of female education, and to render its character solid and substantial, rather than merely external and ornamental, a most important service would be rendered both to society and to the church of Christ.

Some apology may be due to the reader for these plain remarks, but a sense of the immense and almost paramount importance of the subject, has induced me to dwell on it at greater length than the occasion would otherwise have justified. At a time when so much is properly said about the education of the people, and schools for all, it may be permitted to me to recall attention to that most important of all schools, *the infant school at home, kept in the nursery*—under a firm conviction, that she on whom is devolved the early teaching and first moral training of the *child*, has also committed to her solemn trust, the fashioning of the future *man;* the moulding of that character which takes its form and shape for evil or for good, under the plastic hands of the mother and the nurse. How emphatically true is that saying of the wise man,—" A child left to himself bringeth his *mother* to shame! "*

In the year 1799 was formed an institution which, by the blessing of God, has since risen to great eminence of usefulness—I mean the Religious Tract Society. The gratuitous distribution of small religious publications, containing plain statements of evangelical truth, addressed chiefly to the careless and the unconverted, was, at that time, no new thing. It had been a practice commonly adopted by individuals who felt a zealous concern for the honour of God, and a tender regard for the spiritual and eternal welfare of their fellow-men. There have always been in the Christian church *noble* individuals, ambitious of the highest honour and distinction to which men can aspire—to be employed as instruments in the hand of God in rescuing those around them who are perishing for lack of religious knowledge, from the grasp of the great destroyer. Next to the public preaching of the Gospel, no means are more adapted to this blessed purpose than the distribution of portions of saving truth extracted from the Divine word, presented in a clear and striking light to the understanding, and accompanied by pointed and forcible appeals to the conscience. The number of tracts issued from the depository of this Society is known; but the number of souls saved from eternal death by the millions of these winged messengers, sent forth in all directions, and into all countries, can never be ascertained in this world.

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* Prov. xxix. 15. That the Hebrew mothers, in the time of Isaiah, were accustomed to commence a course of religious instruction to their infant children upon their being weaned, and to carry it on by short, easy, and familiar lessons, frequently reiterated, appears by the reference made to the fact, Isaiah xxvii. 9, 10. Would it not be a great benefit if, in immediate connexion with every congregation, an infant-school were established, in which *the pure word of God* might be taught, by a competent female, to the young children of the poor?

My father had the honour—such indeed it was, and such I doubt not he accounted it—of being chairman of the meeting held in St. Paul's Coffee-house, St. Paul's churchyard, on Thursday, May 9th, 1799, at which "It was resolved unanimously—That it appears highly desirable to form a Society for the purpose of printing and distributing Religious Tracts." A committee was appointed to prepare a plan for such an institution; which, having been presented and adopted, ten gentlemen, besides the treasurer and secretary, were elected as a committee to carry the same into effect during the current year.*

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* Rev. George Collison, Rowland Hill, William Newman, W. F. Platt, Alex. Waugh, Matthew Wilks. Messrs. Robert Cowie, Samuel Mills,

The committee laboured so assiduously in the work confided to them, that in the course of twelve months thirty-four tracts were published. When the first annual report was read, 200,000 of these had been sold and distributed. The second report announced that the number of tracts had increased to sixty-one, and the copies sold and distributed to 800,000. The increase in subsequent years has been at a greatly augmented ratio; and the society has now become a large and flourishing concern, carried on under judicious management, and devoting its great resources to the diffusion of religious truth by small books as well as tracts; thus proving how much more good may be effected by combined action, resulting from concert and organisation, than by desultory and irregular individual efforts.

My father continued a member of the committee till the year 1806, when probably the pressure of other engagements induced him to withdraw. In this and other instances, he sustained the honourable position of being among *the first and foremost* to encourage a benevolent design, as one "ready to every good work," forward to lend a helping hand to an infant society, struggling with difficulties amidst the weakness of its first feeble years. When he saw that the cause had acquired considerable strength, and that the same kind of help was no longer needed, he

George Gouger, Thomas Wilson; Treasurer, Joseph Reyner, Esq.; Secretary, Rev. Joseph Hughes, M.A. Mr. Collison, Mr. Mills, and, I believe, Mr. Gouger, yet survive.

was not unwilling to resign it into the hands of other founders, and of those who had joined them, and with a steadiness of purpose truly admirable, devoted his time and strength to his own selected object—his favourite scheme of useful activity, in connexion with another in which he was providentially led about this time to engage.

One of the few survivors of the students admitted into Hoxton Academy in my grandfather's time thus writes:

> "In the second year of my student's life Mr. Thomas Wilson, sen. died, and your father succeeded him in the office of treasurer, and soon leaving his worldly occupation, gave himself up to his God and Saviour, by doing all in his power to make efficient the great and good designs of the evangelical institution at Hoxton. He went heartily into the work, and though about that time there were some heart-stirring movements in the Christian world, and noble societies, formed; I remember well his saying, 'Let those so nobly engaged keep to *their* work, I will keep to *mine*.' Although his pocket and his heart were always open to aid every good work, yet he would say, '*Hoxton is my post, and I will keep to that.*'"

CHAPTER XI.

LIVELY INTEREST FELT BY MY FATHER IN THE STUDENTS OF HOXTON ACADEMY, AND MEANS TAKEN BY HIM TO RENDER THEM USEFUL AND EFFICIENT PREACHERS.

Soon after he was appointed treasurer of Hoxton Academy, and determined to devote his leisure time to the promotion of its welfare, he began to manifest that interest in the students which he continued to feel, in unabated and almost increasing measure, to the last. One who entered in 1792* thus writes: "While I was a student, it was the custom for us to go in turn every Lord's-day morning to the Bethnal green Workhouse at seven o'clock, and preach to the poor inmates. Your father would, on a cold, dark winter's morning, be there—out of sight, to 'hear how the students got on,' and afterwards have a little private talk with the preacher. Well do I remember what a deep impression his kind and affectionate remarks made on me. He would say with the characteristic rubbing of his hands: 'Never forget the three R's—Ruin, Redemption, and Regeneration. Keep to these and you will never fail. They will always supply you with plenty of matter for the whole course of your ministry."*

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* Rev. Michael Castleden, of Woburn, Bedfordshire.

Dr. Philip thus refers to the powerful and beneficial influence which my father exercised over the minds of the students:

"Your father's situation in the college was not merely that which his office as treasurer to the institution would import. He was, in fact, the head of the institution, and the interest he took in the students gave him a paramount influence among them, equally beneficial to the young men themselves, and through their medium, to the church of Christ. Could my fellow-labourers in the Gospel who, like myself, enjoyed the benefit of his counsels and friendship, analyse the elements of character they imbibed under his fostering care, they might trace much of the energising principle to which they have mainly owed their usefulness, to their early acquaintance with the treasurer of Hoxton College. In his society it was impossible to complain of ennui. Without anything like bustle about him, there was something so stirring in his conversation and manner, that he might be said constantly to 'provoke to love and to good works.' Instinct with life, he was a quickening spirit to all who could appreciate the internal power that was continually putting and keeping him in action. I never could spend an hour in his family circle, or look at the man, or listen to him, without feeling my faith strengthened, my hopes invigorated, my charity warmed, my indolence reproved, and my desire to do good increased. I never recollect having seen him at a loss for an object. He had always something before him calling forth the energies of his mind, and the language of all he said and did, was—'Do something! do it! and whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.' He lived for eternity.

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* The thought of calling these grand topics *the three R's*, did not originate with my father, though it was just the kind of pithy and pointed expression which suited his taste. It appears from the Life and Remains of the Rev. Robert Housman, A.B., of Lancaster—an excellent episcopal clergyman—8vo. 1841, that Mr. Berridge was the author of this alliterative compendium:—"Well did he remember, and well did he, during a long life, practise the almost dying advice of good old Berridge: 'Mind, dear sir, you preach the three R's—*Ruin, Redemption, Regeneration.*'" p. cii. My father had probably heard it from Mr. Berridge's own lips. That excellent man died in 1793. He has entered among his extracts, in 1798, the following from a book of Rev. Rowland Hill's: "In his preaching he had but three subjects—Ruin, Redemption, Regeneration. These are the doctrines which humble the sinner, exalt the Saviour, and promote holiness. . . . . He well knows his Bible and his own heart, and speaks from a Divine experience of the glories of that Gospel which has been the power of God to the salvation of his own soul. He lives near to God, knowing that if he feels well, he will be enabled to speak well."

Another saying of Mr. Hill he inserts in 1794: "Ministers should preach practical sermons evangelically, and evangelical sermons practically."

"Among the various means appointed by God for the conversion of the world to Christ, your father regarded the preaching of the Gospel as occupying the first place, and he considered every thing in the Gospel necessary to make men wise unto salvation, as comprehended in three words—Ruin, Redemption, and Regeneration. In his familiar intercourse with the students, he represented his views on the subject by the three R's. By this laconic mode of expression he meant no more than to point out the leading features in the scheme of redemption; and from the danger young men are in, of forgetting, amidst the pursuits of a college life, that in the ministry of the Gospel, Christ is all,—his views, and the manner in which he was in the habit of impressing them upon their minds, were attended with the best effects. It was in a great measure owing to this style of preaching, pressed upon the students by the treasurer of the institution, that Hoxton College continued for so many years to fill up the place for which it was intended by its founders; and if ever it shall come to lose that to which it was indebted for its first popularity, it will lose its conservative principle, and its importance among the churches of Christ.

"A method of preaching which does not unfold the great and leading truths of the Gospel, and which does not point to the ruin of man by the fall, and the provision made in Christ for his recovery, (whatever excellences it may possess of another kind,) may be compared to the mirage in the desert, which deludes the thirsty and perishing traveller with the promise of water, and then abandons him to despair and death."

I cannot forbear subjoining the testimony of another minister, whose age, experience, and observation render him eminently competent to form a judgment and express an opinion on this most important matter—I mean the Rev. Thomas Durant, of Poole, a fellow-student with Dr. Philip, who, in a recent letter to the author, thus writes:—

"I rejoice to hear that you are proceeding with the memoir of one to whom I ever have felt, and ever shall feel, myself deeply—inexpressibly indebted for numerous favours which Heaven alone can repay. Your excellent father always treated me with great and delicate kindness.

". . . . . He was ever anxious to recall and keep me to the fundamental principles of the Gospel, to the three R's, as he designated them, *Ruin*, *Redemption*, *Regeneration*. And, in my inmost conscience, I believe that this constant recurrence to these subjects did me and some others immense good. I scarcely need assure you that in the actual discharge of my ministerial and pastoral engagements, I saw and felt increasingly the need of ever keeping the three R's in view, amidst all that variety of statement and illustration which a full and honest exposition of the Holy Scriptures demands; and which, in all circumstances—and especially in this day of general education—the people will, and have a right to require. . . . . .

"He was too young to know anything personally of George Whitefield, but his early and continued attendance at the Tabernacle, where he heard the most animated and energetic preachers of that time, formed his taste for preaching. And this, as well as his settled judgment, ever caused him to urge upon us—in addition to great diligence in study—the necessity of a vivacious manner of speaking, of direct and pungent addresses to the conscience, and of insisting upon the several graces of the Christian character as fruits of the Spirit, as proofs of personal religion, and as the strongest recommendation of evangelical truths to the understandings and the hearts of mankind. To his urgent exhortations of this kind . . . . . . I owe, under God, a large portion of that success in my ministry with which I have been favoured."[*]

There was another quality of preaching upon which my father was accustomed to insist in his free and familiar conversations with the students, sometimes almost to weariness[†]—I mean simplicity, or a plain, inartificial, inornate style of thought and expression. I may here introduce a few brief extracts from his memorandum books.

"The use of knowledge is to enable a man to speak more plainly." . . . . Speak with the greatest plainness; as though your hearers had never heard the Gospel before."

"Dr. Johnson said, 'The success of the Methodists is owing to their expressing themselves in a plain and familiar manner, which is the only way to do good to the common people."

"Words to show the learning and ingenuity of the preacher are like painted windows, which keep out the light."[‡]

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[*] Mr. Durant was one of those students who were induced by my father's recommendation and encouragement, to persevere in their studies for the ministry, under some altered state of events or circumstances which might otherwise have led them to abandon their original purpose. He proved a worthy successor at Poole to an excellent minister already mentioned—Mr. Ashburner, and has lately, after a most honourable and useful course, resigned the pastorate of a large and flourishing church in that town.

[†] I have often heard him mention the remark of one of the students who entered in the year 1798: 'We are tired of hearing so much about plain preaching.'

[‡] "Let not the window be so painted as to keep out the light." Baxter's Saints' Rest, 4to., 1677, p. 542. "Let your preaching be

"Mr. Waugh's charge to Mr. Easton, (1793):

"'Use native simplicity, and much plainness of speech. Flowers in a corn-field may please the uninterested traveller as he pursues his journey, and attends only to the beauty of the scene; but they are hurtful to the crop. In pointing out to the friend whom I love as my own soul, the path through an enemy's country, I make use of the plainest and most intelligible words that language will afford.'"

The following are from the second volume of Milner's Church History:

"As a preacher, Augustine doubtless excelled, but his excellency lay in exhibiting that which was useful to the vulgar, not that which was entertaining to the learned. Perhaps in no age was the pastoral taste more depraved than it is in the present. A highly-finished, elaborate style is looked upon as the perfection of a Christian speaker, and the manner rather than the matter is the chief object. It is not considered, that an artificial and polished arrangement of sentences is lost on a vulgar audience, and those who affect it, are, it is to be feared, little moved themselves with the importance of divine things, and are far more solicitous for their own character as speakers, than for the spiritual profit of their hearers.

"Plain, artless addresses to the populace by men fearing God, and speaking of divine things in fervour and charity, have been attended with the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power; and souls have been rescued by these means from sin and Satan.

plain. Painted glass is most curious; plain glass is most perspicuous. Preach a crucified Saviour in a crucified style. Paul taught so plainly that the Corinthians thought him a dunce." Rev. Thos. Porter at an Ordination.—Life of Philip Henry, edit. Sir J. B. Williams, 1825, p. 25, note.

> "Plain, downright—above all things perspicuous and intelligible, without being rude or clownish, he will descend to the lowest comprehension of his audience.
>
> "The difference between a good and bad preacher. The one seeks the glory of Jesus Christ, by explaining doctrines in familiar discourse; the other uses the utmost strength of his eloquence, to gain reputation. The latter handles trifles with elaborate language, the former elevates a plain discourse by the weight of his thoughts."

The rule he laid down was—'Preach in so plain and simple a style that the poor may understand,' and he pointed to the Prince of preachers, as the model to be ever kept in view—to Him whom the common people heard gladly, and by whom it was said in reference to his own public ministry—"The poor have the Gospel preached unto them." 'See,' he would say, 'the simplicity of Christ; why everybody understood him; copy this example.'

There were some other points in reference to manner, strain, and mode of address, which my father was accustomed to urge upon the students, and which he might have called the three A's—I mean Animation, Affection, and Application—an earnest, energetic mode of address, indicating real and strong inward feeling, intense emotion, a deep personal interest, and affectionate concern on the part of the preacher; and a pointed address and powerful appeal to the hearts and consciences of the hearers.

He often repeated a saying which is one of those aphoristic maxims handed down by tradition from age to age, which it would perhaps be a vain attempt to trace to the original author—'Application is the soul of preaching.'* I have heard him mention more than once the following circumstance. A venerable lady, the wife of an eminent minister in London, speaking to a young man (then a student in Hoxton Academy) who was about to preach for her husband in his absence, mentioned to him the usual length of the service, and expressed a hope that he would not detain the congregation beyond the accustomed hour; adding—"But whatever you omit or fail to say, be sure you do not forget *the application.*"

He exceedingly disapproved of what he used to call preaching *before* rather than *to* the people; and although he recommended the students to write out their sermons, he strongly objected to their committing them to memory and repeating them word for word. This he thought a slavish custom, which cramped and fettered the mind—restraining the warm flow of fresh feeling, and destroying all freedom of address. In a little tract printed by him in 1802, entitled, "Hints to Young Ministers, designed more particularly for the use of those educated in Hoxton Academy," he thus expressed his opinion upon this and other points :—

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* It is ascribed by Dr. Calamy to one of the ejected ministers, whose name I cannot at present mention. Dr. Samuel Wright, an eminent English Presbyterian minister in London, one of the most popular and useful preachers of his time, in the sermon which he published on the death of his uncle, Rev. Thomas Cotton, M.A., 1730, thus writes—"From him I learned in a manner that I have reason to be thankful for, that *application* is the very life of preaching." My father, in a letter dated Aug. 16, 1842, ascribes the same saying to Whitefield.

"Prepare your sermons as if all depended upon the means; and when you deliver them, still depend upon the blessed Spirit, as if you had made no preparation. Do not commit to memory more than the leading ideas of the subject. *Words* will make haste to follow *things*. The best preparation for pulpit exercises is to understand the subject; the best rule for delivering what you have prepared is to feel it. Never attempt to copy the peculiar manner of other ministers; but speak in a natural, easy, affectionate, and persuasive way. You must speak with *animation*, that the people may perceive you feel the subject, for without *energy* you are not likely to secure their attention. Mankind are sunk into so fatal a degeneracy, and are by nature at such an awful distance from God, that all the earnest zeal of the preacher should be employed to show them their danger and point them to the remedy. Urge what you deliver as a man would plead for his own life, and as if it were your last sermon. Tell those who would have you spare yourself, that time is short, eternity is at hand, the Judge is before the door.

"Carry the Gospel into [neglected parts of the town] and into the adjacent villages, where men are perishing for lack of knowledge . . . . The will of Christ is indisputable—'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. Go out into the highways and hedges, and *compel* them to come in, that my house may be filled.' No other kind of preaching has so immediate a tendency to enlarge the mind, and to excite compassion and zeal. You will thus get acquainted with the habits of thinking and practice peculiar to every class, and learn to speak to every man in his own way. Your private conversation and public discourses, instead of being stiff, uninteresting, and common-place remark, borrowed from books, or excogitated in the cloister, will come directly to the wants, the convictions, the desires, and the prospects of those to whom they are addressed."

The whole of this tract is marked by the characteristic qualities which distinguished all my father said and wrote—simplicity, directness, and point.* The following extracts may serve to illustrate his views on the nature and importance of the ministerial office, and the indispensable obligation devolving on all who undertake its duties, to devote their whole souls to the work, and to prosecute it with the most strenuous and energetic effort.

"Your work requires the greatest diligence and the most constant application. 'Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine; meditate on these things, give yourselves wholly to them.' The indolent preacher is as an hireling, and not a shepherd. Where the Gospel has its full influence, it calls forth into active exercise and strenuous exertion all the powers of the soul; and produces the most tender concern for the happiness of mankind. This concern does not evaporate in unavailing pity, but rouses to action, and girding itself for service, inquires, 'What can be done towards banishing human misery and making men happy?' Shall the mechanic, the manufacturer, the artist, and the philosopher be all actively employed, with the utmost stretch of thought, to find out what may be useful in their peculiar arts and sciences; while the professed ministers of Jesus employ no energies, exert not the vigour of their souls in *their* proper department? Let it rather appear that you are busied in discovering every way of access for divine truth to the human heart, and that you are resolved to employ all the means you can think of, as conducive to that end. Your reward does not depend on your success, but on your labour."

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* I do not mean to intimate that these Hints were his own composition; I believe they consisted chiefly of selections from various authors.

The points of practical godliness which he presses are, a Christian temper and spirit, love, meekness, humility, prudence, self-denial, affability and cheerfulness, combined with seriousness and gravity. He urges them to earnest and persevering prayer, with a diligent study of the Scriptures :—

"Read the word of God regularly through at least once in the year. All other books are cisterns, which can hold no more than what is put into them, in which you find only standing water; this is a spring of living water. Why should you be satisfying your thirst from the stream, whilst the fountain is free of access? Become *thoroughly acquainted* with the Bible: and let me beseech you never to read the Scriptures without previous fervent prayer to the Holy Spirit, to open your understanding, to understand them."

The following passages exhibit in a strong light his views in reference to the topics and manner of preaching:

"Never take a text which you do not understand, and make a point of conscience to give the literal meaning of it. Always keep to the truths in the text. Insist largely and fully on the great cardinal doctrines and principles of Christianity—the character of God, the purity and extent of the law, the ruined and miserable condition of *all* men as sinners, the necessity of regeneration by the power of the Holy Spirit, and free justification by faith through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, who is to be set forth as the sum and substance of the Gospel. When you have proved and illustrated the propositions laid down, you have done but little; it is from this point that you are to set out by a faithful application of them to the hearts and consciences of your hearers, to strip the sinner of every subterfuge and excuse, that conviction may lead to repentance. To produce this effect, address yourself to the conscience in powerful interrogatives. David was insensible till Nathan said, '*Thou* art the man.' You preach not merely to explain God's word, but to save souls."

Some portion of a recent letter from the Rev. George Clayton, of Walworth, will show that my father did not restrict his paternal counsels to the weightier matters of the ministerial office, but descended to the habits of ordinary life:—

"While I was passing through my academical course, I was a frequent visitor at his house, and received the kindest notice from him and your excellent mother. He was wont to converse with me on the importance of personal piety in the candidate for the Christian ministry; on the necessity of life, energy, and zeal in the exercises of the pulpit; on the duty of using great plainness and perspicuity of language, in treating with men on the matter of their everlasting interests; and recommended a full and prominent exhibition of Christ in every sermon. He would remark in his own simple and inartificial style, that a discourse from the pulpit of which the Lord Jesus was not the beginning, the middle, and the ending, however it might sparkle with genius, or dazzle by its eloquence, was 'good for nothing.'

"He would sometimes carry his friendly admonitions to the students into the minutest detail. . . . Foppishness in dress he despised, and guarded the young men against all excess in complying with the caprices of fashion.

"Several of the students were in comparatively necessitous circumstances, and if he sometimes gave them plain and unceremonious counsels, he could at the same time take five or ten guineas from his purse to enable them to meet their expenses. This he did frequently.*

"He had an implacable antipathy to the practice of smoking tobacco in the college, and laboured incessantly to check and to abolish it.

"Many would utterly contemn matters of this kind as trivial, and undeserving of notice; but such things as these serve to illustrate both the character of the mind and the principles of benevolence by which some men are governed in their intercourse with others, especially among the young. He confers upon a young minister a boon of incalculable value, who strives to weed out of his ordinary habits whatsoever will render him less acceptable to the best society, less open to the censure of the malignant, more indifferent to sensual gratifications, and more entirely consistent and exemplary in private and public life.

"I, therefore, for one, have reason to be thankful to Mr. Thomas Wilson for those strictures which assisted to give a right bias to the mind, and a right tone to the habits; although I attach, of course, infinitely greater consideration to those sterling qualities of the mind and heart, and those exalted attainments in wisdom, in grace, and disinterested generosity, by which he stood pre-eminent amongst the religious philanthropists of his age."

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* As I have reason to believe that some portion at least of what my father gave to poor students was not from his own purse, I feel it right to mention this fact.

CHAPTER XII.

CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH LED MY FATHER TO BECOME A BUILDER OF CHAPELS —ORIGIN AND FOUNDATION OF HOXTON ACADEMY CHAPEL—HIS ATTEMPTS TO REVIVE DECAYED CONGREGATIONS IN THE COUNTRY—BRENTWOOD——HARWICH— REIGATE—LYNN — GUILDFORD—PETERBOROUGH—DUDLEY ROCHFORD—EPSOM—DARTMOUTH—LISKEARD.

I HAVE no reason to believe that the building of chapels formed any part of my father's original plan of action. Indeed, there is some reason to conclude, from a passage in one of his early letters, that he was not at that time very sanguine in his expectations of great spiritual fruit from the multiplication of chapels then commencing. Yet he had been for many years one of the ordinary contributors to the chapel cases which were brought to London, and shortly after his father's death he became a liberal subscriber to the erection of a chapel at Foleshill near Coventry—a place in which he felt a lively interest—having long known it, and being well acquainted with the worthy minister settled there—the late Rev. Jonathan Evans.*

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* Among the entries in his account-book of gifts to this place are the following :—

1794. Nov. 25.	To Mr. Evans, for Foleshill meeting	£20	0	0
1798. Sept. 7.	To second gift to Foleshill Chapel .	50	0	0

He was one of the trustees of the chapel, and has recorded in his memorandum-books some striking cases of conversion through Mr. Evans's ministry.

In the year 1796 a public subscription was raised, and some outbuildings on the premises belonging to Hoxton Academy were converted into a small chapel, with a view to afford the students an opportunity for exercising their abilities in preaching, and to impart religious instruction to the inhabitants of a populous and rapidly increasing neighbourhood.* This building was opened for public worship in October; Mr. Jay, of Bath, preaching on the occasion. A lecture was established on Thursday evenings, at which the students preached in rotation—the tutor, Mr. Simpson, officiating regularly on the Lord's-day.† The congregation in a few years, increased so much as to render this chapel incommodious, and in 1799 Mr. Simpson having accepted an invitation to become the pastor of a Congregational church then meeting in Artillery street, Spitalfields, it was then expected that most—if not all—the members of the church which had been formed at Hoxton would withdraw, and join in communion with the church in Artillery street, in which case the small chapel would probably have been supplied entirely by the students. It afterwards appeared, however, that the little church were not disposed to quit the place they had first occupied. They therefore determined to keep together as a church, and my father soon afterward being induced to attend at the chapel occasionally, observed an increasing disposition to hear the Gospel in that place. This first led him to form the purpose of erecting a new and larger chapel. As a preliminary step, he took active measures for obtaining an extension of the term for which the lease of the premises had been granted in 1791 by Dr. Williams's trustees, of which only twenty-six years then remained. He waited first upon the late Rev. Dr. Abraham Rees, who received him courteously, expressed himself in a manner friendly to the object, and offered to present the application to the trustees—who readily complied with the request of the committee by cancelling the old lease and granting a new one for the term of sixty-one years, at a moderate rent, being only a small advance on the previous annual sum. The way having thus been cleared, my father gave directions for taking down the little chapel and erecting a larger and more commodious building on part of the garden. This chapel was opened on Thursday afternoon, April 24, 1800; the late Rev. Joseph Slatterie, of Chatham, preaching on the occasion from Psalm cxxxii. 13—16, "For the Lord hath chosen Zion ; He hath desired it for his habitation," &c.* It may truly be said that this erection was an instance of that faith in God, and confidence in his cause, for which my father was distinguished during his future life. He says: "I met with no encouragement in doing this." Even some of those from whom he might have expected countenance and support said, "it would never be filled." It was filled, however, and even his own sanguine expectations were exceeded; for in the course of six years two enlargements were required,* and after these, it was found too small.

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* Toward the subscription for this purpose my father gave £20 October 27, 1796.

† Mr. Simpson had, for some previous years, preached at a small chapel in the upper part of Hoxton, which has been, for many years past, occupied by a congregation of Wesleyan Methodists.

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* Evangelical Magazine, 1800, p. 218.

My father mentions a circumstance which evidently made a deep impression upon his mind at the time, and to which he was often accustomed to advert in following years. The cost of this chapel was £850. Soon after its erection his uncle (the late John Remington, Esq., of Milk street) advised him to underwrite—that is, to subscribe his name for certain amounts of risk on policies of marine insurance. This he did, and continued for six or eight months, not knowing whether profit or loss would be the result. He was not called upon for any advance of money, and the gain produced was above £700. He never afterward resumed the practice, and his uncle, who continued it, lost a considerable amount. This my father evidently regarded as an encouragement from his great Master to go forward in his work. He might, perhaps, also consider it as a providential intimation of the Divine will, that he should engage more actively and extensively in this particular department of service.

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* The latter and more considerable of these was in 1804.

His attention was directed in 1799, and some following years, to several places where congregations which had formerly existed in a flourishing condition were greatly reduced, or where meeting-houses, once filled with hearers, had fallen into decay, and been for many years closed. He was fired with the high ambition of being employed as an instrument to "build the old wastes, to repair the ruined places, and plant that which was desolate," or to revive and strengthen that which was ready to die.

The first case of this kind which he mentions* was that of Brentwood, a considerable market-town in Essex, about eighteen miles from London. Two meeting-houses in this town were shut up in 1798. In one, which was then in a very dilapidated state, the Rev. Joseph Barber, pastor of the church in Aldermanbury, London, had formerly preached for several years. This was obtained by Rev. Samuel Douglas, of Chelmsford, (who had been one of the first pupils at Mile End;) and students were sent at his request from Hoxton Academy to preach, at first, once a fortnight, and afterward every Lord's-day, but with little success. My father, in 1799, proposed to Mr. David Smith, one of the senior students, that if he would go to Brentwood, and make an attempt to raise a congregation, *he* would guarantee sixty pounds toward his support, by making up any deficiency which there might be, during the first year.* The reader will peruse with interest Mr. Smith's own account of this first successful effort.

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* In some brief and hastily-penned notes of his various attempts to serve the cause of God, from 1798.

"When my preparatory studies were nearly finished, I received a unanimous invitation to settle over a respectable church and congregation; but Mr. Wilson, with the full concurrence of my excellent tutor, Mr. Simpson, earnestly advised me to give that up and commence my ministry at Brentwood. He felt very much for the inhabitants of this town and its vicinity, then in a state of spiritual darkness and destitution. There had been no settled ministry for upwards of forty years. Mr. Wilson visited Brentwood, and when he beheld the town, was ready to weep over it. Students were regularly sent to preach, but such was the strong feeling of prejudice in the higher and middle classes against Dissenters, and such were the corrupt and depraved habits of the poorer class, that not more than twenty or thirty persons could be collected as a congregation. Mr. Wilson expressed his earnest wish that I would decline the invitation which I had received, and try Brentwood for twelve months—accompanied by an offer of pecuniary assistance. After due consideration and earnest prayer to God for direction, I complied with this request, and commenced my labours at Brentwood. A Sunday-school was formed amidst much opposition—being at that time considered *a great evil* by the higher orders. Mr. Wilson took the greatest interest in this effort, which succeeded, and has continued to prosper. Before the twelve months closed, prejudice gave way; there was a gradual increase of hearers; a church was formed, consisting of five persons, who invited me to become their pastor. I complied with their call, and was ordained, June 1800. My hopes of being, by the Divine blessing, the honoured instrument of reviving the good cause were soon realised. The congregation and church gradually increased, and the chapel has since been twice enlarged. My beloved friend and patron was always anxious to hear news from Brentwood. When I was able to tell him that some had been awakened to a concern for salvation, or that two or three had joined the church, his countenance would lighten up, he would rub his hands, and say with a smile, 'Well, Mr. Smith, we did right in sending you to Brentwood, and you did right in going. I hope God will still bless you. Go on.'

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* The deficiency was thirty pounds. After the first year the congregation were able and willing to do what every congregation is bound in honour and conscience to do—*if possible*—support their own minister. My father also gave fifty pounds in order to recover the lease of the minister's house at Brentwood, which an Independent minister in London—notorious for being no friend to the Methodists, had let at an annual rent of three pounds—a sum much below its value.

"I trust the preaching of the Gospel has been blessed by the great Head of the church to the salvation of many persons, not a few of whom died in the faith, and a goodly number are yet walking in the narrow path that leadeth to everlasting life. Thus were the pious wishes and confident expectation of my beloved departed friend realised." *

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* The following letter from Mr. Smith to my father, dated Brentwood, October 2, 1820, will show his continued regard for that place, and the grateful sense entertained of the valuable services which he had rendered:

"My dear Sir,—I am requested by the committee and the members of the church and congregation to convey to you the grateful sense they feel of all your kindness in assisting the cause of the Redeemer at Brentwood, and particularly to return to you their *sincerest thanks* for the loan advanced during the pressure of the late enlargement—the last payment of which Mr. Wyatt, the treasurer, is requested to make to you to-morrow.

"May your valuable life be long spared as an increasing blessing to

The next fact of this kind which he mentions may be recorded in his own words: "I went to spend a few days at Harwich [in 1799], and see the meeting, which was small and in very bad repair. There was no ground to afford room for enlargement; but hearing that an adjoining house and land were to be purchased for £200, I bought them—the seller not knowing the object I had in view. I gave as much as was needed to build a larger chapel; the other part the people purchased for £120, and pulled down the house to make a better road to the chapel."

Some additional particulars will be obtained from the following extracts of a letter lately received from the venerable minister at Harwich, Rev. W. Hordle.

"Mr. Wilson took a very lively interest in the almost expiring cause of Christ at Harwich, at the time of my visiting this place from the Academy, in 1799. After I had accepted the pastorate, he paid a visit to Harwich, and thought it advisable that a new chapel should be erected, (the old small building being almost a ruin.) This was done, and the new chapel was opened in 1800. During his visit he purchased a

that important institution [Hoxton Academy] with which, for so many years, you have been identified, and which, I am fully persuaded, owes its prosperity in a very great measure (under God) to your exertions; and may many destitute churches and declining interests be, by your kind and liberal endeavours, made, like poor Brentwood, to blossom as the rose!

"I have been trying to get you another subscriber or two. I trust I shall feel it a pleasure as well as a duty to increase the number of subscribers here, and to promote a collection.

"Believe me, dear Sir, to remain
"Yours truly, and much obliged,
"D. Smith."

small cottage and a piece of ground adjoining the old chapel, which cost him, with the conveyance, £220. This cottage (afterwards taken down for a gateway) and piece of ground he conveyed to the trustees, (he himself becoming one of the number) for £120, most generously giving us the other £100. This sum of £120, with interest, was paid him a few years afterwards. At a subsequent period he lent us £200 on interest, which was all paid off about the year 1813.

"I have never forgotten the kindness shown me by Mr. Wilson, when, in the summer of 1800, I spent a month in London for the purpose of obtaining donations among the friends of the Gospel in the great city, towards the building of our chapel. He most hospitably entertained me at his house the whole time, and I seemed to go in and out as one of the family."

In the year 1801 my father rescued from becoming a total wreck a very small old meeting-house at Reigate, in Surrey, which had been shut up above twenty years. Two persons, the descendants of former trustees, refused to allow the building to be occupied as a place of worship. He made inquiries in order to find out the heir-at-law of the surviving trustee, and having, after much search, traced him to Newgate, where he was a prisoner for debt, paid him twenty guineas as an acknowledgment for conveying the premises to trustees. Besides this, he also paid £150 for needful repair of the building. It was opened by the Rev. Rowland Hill; but the enemy, thus assailed in one of his strong-holds, resented the intrusion; and although, for fear of penal consequences, he dared not raise an open and violent disturbance, sought to accomplish his malignant purpose by interrupting the preacher toward the close of the service in a secret unobserved manner. The device resorted to was to throw into the chapel some chemical substance—the effluvia of which produced violent irritation of the throat and chest, causing most of the persons present to cough and sneeze, so that the preacher was compelled abruptly to terminate his discourse, and dismiss the congregation.

At this place my father's faith and patience were tried for many years. The work was carried on for some time under very discouraging circumstances, although not without some beneficial result; but it was long before any prospect appeared of a permanent and self-sustaining cause being established. One obstacle in the way of success was, that there was no individual on the spot disposed to help forward the work by affording it countenance, and entertaining the preachers who were sent. The chapel, I believe, was shut up for some time. My father, however, did not abandon the attempt to raise the standard of the cross in this wicked town. In January, 1819, the chapel having become much decayed and unfit to be used as a place for public worship, he built a new one, which cost him £350. He took, however, the precaution of adapting its construction in such a manner that, in case a congregation should not be raised in a reasonable time, it might be converted into two cottages. Happily, this secondary purpose was not required. The new chapel was opened in June, 1819, sermons being preached by the Rev. James Stratten, of Paddington, and the late Rev. Dr. Harris, of Hoxton Academy.

In a letter addressed to my father by the late Rev. John Wooldridge, of Jamaica—then a student in Hoxton Academy, the writer gave, at his request, some account of the success which had attended his labours when preaching at the new chapel, during the vacation of 1819. The congregation on the first Lord's-day after the opening was very small; and so powerful was the prejudice that it was found impossible to procure a lodging for Mr. W. in the whole town; but as he was preparing to leave—in order to take up his abode at Dorking, several miles distant, he was informed that lodgings might probably be obtained at a farm-house about two miles from Reigate. An application to the family who resided there being successful, Mr. W. determined diligently to employ all means, in order to the conversion of the inmates, whom he found utterly ignorant of the only way of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. He introduced family worship, a custom before unheard of. After some time, a spirit of inquiry was excited, and such questions as these were asked: 'Pray, sir, is that Bible you read the same as our clergyman reads?' 'May I ask, sir, do your ministers preach from a text?' The family were, after some time, led to attend the chapel, and to search the Scriptures for themselves—and there was reason to hope that in some of its members, and in other youthful individuals, Mr. Wooldridge gathered the first-fruits of his ministerial labours. The promise, "Be not weary in well doing, for in due time ye shall reap if ye faint not," was fulfilled in this case. The congregation gradually, although slowly, increased, and instead of converting the chapel into cottages, my father was induced to erect, in 1831, a very neat and commodious new chapel (with school-rooms attached) considerably larger than the former. It was opened Sept. 11; and in it not a few have been born to God under the ministry of the present pastor, Rev. Thomas Rees, who settled there in 1833.

Mr. Rees thus writes: "When your honoured father first directed his attention to Reigate, the very few Dissenters in the place had to endure the most bitter persecution. The late Rev. Rowland Hill used to say that Reigate was the worst place he ever visited. But for your father's pecuniary aid, humanly speaking, no minister could ever have been settled here. Of all the places to which his benevolent exertions were directed, I know of none more indebted to him than Reigate. His memory is still fresh and fragrant among us."

In the year 1802 a person who called on my father for the purpose of asking him to contribute to a poor minister, happened to mention that an old English Presbyterian meeting-house at Lynn, in Norfolk, was closed. He promptly replied, "I will inquire about it;" and having been referred to an individual resident at Lynn, obtained, in answer to a letter, the name of one of the trustees, to whom he wrote, requesting that a student might be allowed to preach in it during the midsummer vacation. The answer was, that a minister belonging to the Presbyterian denomination was expected. My father, not being one of those who quickly lose sight of an object on which their eye has once been fixed, did not consider this answer final. The year following, having heard that the meeting-house continued shut up, he wrote again—offering to send a student for the vacation at his own expense, if parties there would provide him with board and lodging. This offer was accepted. Means were taken to excite attention, tracts furnished by him were distributed, sermons were preached to young persons, and a student from the college after some time settled as pastor. The previously deserted meeting was soon filled, and was afterwards considerably enlarged, and a vestry added. A Sunday-school was instituted. My father (writing in 1808) adds: "Three young men have been received from Lynn as students at Hoxton Academy." A large and flourishing congregation now exists in this town under the ministry of the Rev. Robert Hamilton, who has furnished the following particulars:—

"The expenses of supplies, whilst the church was in its infant state, were chiefly borne by him; and he afforded no inconsiderable aid towards the enlargements. He was ever found a faithful friend and adviser in many cases in which the *practical wisdom*, which he so eminently possessed, was greatly needed.

After my settlement here, in April, 1838, it was decided to erect a new and larger place of worship. No sooner was Mr. Wilson made acquainted with the decision, than, being satisfied of its propriety, he generously and spontaneously offered the sum of £100 towards the undertaking. The new building, which is justly described as 'substantial and commodious, neat and elegant,' was opened for public worship October 17; it will accommodate between eight and nine hundred persons, its dimensions being 67 feet by 47."*

The late excellent Rev. James Bowden of Tooting, the founder of the Surrey mission, who was always deeply concerned for the spiritual interests of that important county, informed my father in 1801 that the old English Presbyterian meeting-house in Guildford was in a ruinous condition, the trustees all dead, and the writings lost; and that an endowment, founded by a clergyman of the Church of England—was in danger of being lost to Guildford, and being wholly appropriated to a minister at Dorking, who was, both by profession and practice, an Antinomian.

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* Mr. Hamilton has also communicated some further information obtained from various sources:—

"It is impossible to estimate too highly the service rendered by your father to the cause of scriptural independency in this town. Through his instrumentality under God it first took its rise here, and by him it was constantly fostered and cherished. Nor are there wanting those who have perfect knowledge and most grateful recollections of his very earliest efforts in this good work.

"In 1802, Mr. Wilson having heard that a chapel which belonged to the Presbyterians had been closed for some months, entered upon a correspondence with the late Rev. S. Newton, of Norwich, and J. Carter, of Mattishall, from whom he obtained such information as led him to make a personal visit to Lynn. On that occasion, he had an interview with all the surviving trustees, and suggested to them the importance of re-opening the place for the preaching of the Gospel in accordance with the doctrinal views held by them. To his proposal of sending a student from Hoxton Academy they readily acceded. He also took an active part in getting a new trust-deed made."

My father saw and felt at once the necessity of prompt and decisive measures being taken for the benefit of an important town where a respectable chapel was greatly needed. He acted like himself, and in a manner worthy of the cause in which he was engaged, and to which his life was devoted. He shortly after paid a visit to Guildford—taking with him a solicitor (the late Mr. Thomas Pellatt) and a builder, "took possession by the keys," and gave directions to the builder to take down the ruined building, and to erect another. This was done at a cost of about £700, the whole of which he defrayed. The new chapel was opened June 16, 1802; the late Mr. Griffin, of Portsea, preaching in the afternoon from Luke vii. 72, the late Dr. Bogue in the evening from 1 John iii. 8.* A permanent congregation has been raised in this chapel, over which the Rev. Stephen Percy, from Hoxton Academy, was settled in 1811. Mr. P. still continues the minister, and the "pleasing prospect of success" of which my father speaks, has been realised to a considerable extent.

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* Evangelical Magazine, 1802, p. 334. In that announcement, my father's name is not mentioned, but he is described as "an individual at a distance, who feels something of the duty incumbent on all who have received many talents to use them to the best of purposes." The duty, however, is equally binding—whether the talents received are many or few.

In the year 1802 my father was informed that a neat chapel at Peterborough, which was erected in consequence of the preaching of the Rev. C. Glascott out of doors, had been shut up seven years. He wrote to some person upon the spot, and offered to send one of the Hoxton students as a supply during the vacation. This was accepted, and a congregation was gathered by the preaching of several students in succession, and by the distribution of religious tracts. In 1806 Mr. Harris* went to Peterborough. My father was present at his ordination. "Never (writes Mr. H.) shall I lose sight of his lively, animated manner when he addressed the crowded assembly at the close of the service."

He afterward made more than one visit to Peterborough, and for many years acted the part of a kind friend and liberal benefactor. Mr. Harris says, in a recent letter:—

> "During the six years of my continuance there I was encouraged by him to introduce the Gospel into Maxey, Market-Deeping, Yaxley, Long Orton, besides preaching in the open air in almost all the surrounding villages, in which service students from Hoxton were frequently my helpers. The expense of these efforts was chiefly borne by your honoured parent, whose memory can never perish in these localities. At first the congregation was frequently annoyed in public worship—once by one of the curates of the church. By my kind

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* Rev John Harris, now of St. Alban's.

friend's advice I wrote to the bishop, (Dr. Madan,) who very graciously called at my lodgings, sat down, inquired into the matter, and said, 'As long as I hold my oversight of this diocese, the Dissenters shall not be annoyed in any manner—I have a family connexion with them, and I am not ashamed of it.' He left by taking my hand, and forthwith dismissed the curate."

My father adds, "The place has been filled, and Mr. Harris's ministry has been very useful in Peterborough and the adjacent villages."

A new chapel at Dudley, in Worcestershire, was in debt, and the work nearly at a stand for want of adequate pecuniary support. My father in 1801 offered one of the students—the late Rev. James Dawson—twenty pounds, in aid of the people's contribution toward a salary for one year. At the end of that time he gave fifty pounds, and advanced on loan £200 toward the removal of the debt. This important object was accomplished, and the £200 were honourably repaid, through Mr. Dawson's exertions. Several enlargements were afterward made, and Mr. Dawson's ministry continued to prosper till his death in 1843. In 1840 a new and much larger chapel was erected, containing seats for 1400 persons, with school-rooms for 700 children. There is now a flourishing congregation under the efficient ministry of Mr. Dawson's successor, the Rev. John Raven. Had not my father come forward to aid in the time of need—when the cause of God in this place was low and languishing, the work might have been altogether abandoned; but his timely assistance not only saved the chapel from being closed, but ultimately led to a great enlargement and extension. "By whom should Jacob arise when he is small," but by a man of faith and courage—prepared to give a right answer to the question, "Who hath despised the day of small things?" He lived to see in this, as in other places, "the little one become a thousand."

In 1805 he used means to rescue from Unitarian perversion the old meeting-house at Rochford, in Essex, a place formerly celebrated for the preaching of a Puritan divine, whose energetic delivery obtained for him the designation—'Rousing Fenner.' Some good women did all they could to get a minister of evangelical sentiments introduced, but one man of influence opposed. My father, acting with prudence and discretion, succeeded in getting permission for the late Rev. James Davison, of Exeter, to preach for a sabbath or two. His amiable manners recommended him to the people, and his preaching being acceptable, he was requested to remain a few more sabbaths. The individual before referred to raised an opposition, but a vote of the church being taken, there appeared to be a majority for Mr. Davison, who was ordained December 11. There is now a flourishing congregation under the ministry of Rev. E. F. Bodley.

In the same year an effort was made by a few individuals to raise a congregation at Hastings—a town then deplorably destitute of evangelical instruction. My father encouraged the attempt. He gave at first fifty pounds, and afterwards advanced another fifty pounds, which was not repaid. Some reference to the state of this town will be found in the subsequent pages, from which it will appear that he used every effort to obtain for the chapel a suitable young minister. He also gave, for many years, a subscription toward the minister's support.

The old Presbyterian meeting-house at Epsom, in Surrey—formerly a place of fashionable resort, on account of a celebrated saline spring in the neighbourhood—had for many years been attended by several persons of opulence and their families; but the congregation gradually diminished, until at length it was reduced to so low a state that the doors were closed. The building had been shut up more than twenty years when my father made an unsuccessful attempt to obtain it, but in 1805 (a year or two afterward) a gentleman since deceased, who had a country house in the neighbourhood, succeeded in gaining possession, and afterwards conveyed it to trustees. The necessary repairs cost about £350, towards which my father contributed fifty pounds. He also engaged to advance half the sum that might be deficient on that account, which moiety, I believe, amounted to about £150, but I have not been able to obtain the exact particulars.

In 1824 this chapel was found to be so much out of repair as to be considered unsafe. A new roof was placed upon it, and other considerable repairs were effected. Toward this, the friends at Epsom subscribed £100; my father, besides giving £50 as his own contribution, advanced £350, of which, I have reason to believe, a considerable portion was not repaid. The chapel was re-opened January 28, 1825; sermons were preached on the occasion by Rev. George Clayton, of Walworth, and Rev. James Stratten, of Paddington. At this place, Dr. John Harris, the celebrated author of 'Mammon,' after leaving Hoxton Academy in this year, began his ministerial course. How well he improved the leisure and quietude which this retired situation afforded him during the thirteen years that he continued to reside here, his more public subsequent course has afforded ample proof.

Valuable assistance was rendered to the re-establishment of this congregation by an excellent member of the church of England, then resident at Epsom.

That my father, in his attempts to raise and revive what had fallen into decay, not only gave money and time, but also active personal service, will be farther apparent by an extract from Dr. Philip's notes.

"He was not only not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, but he rejoiced when called upon to suffer shame for its sake. When it was his intention to introduce the Gospel into any dark part of the country, where opposition was expected, he would come to the college, and ask one of the students to accompany him. On these occasions, he would sometimes go from house to house, distributing tracts, and inviting the people to hear the preacher accompanying him. He would visit the humblest abodes of the poor, to request them to send their children to the Sunday-school. In some instances I have known him meet with great rudeness, attended even with threats, but instead of being discouraged, he would smile and say, We must persevere, and who knows but that we may gain upon them at last, and live to see some of the greatest opposers become the warmest supporters of the cause they are now so much set against?"

In almost every instance, with scarcely a single exception, his persevering efforts were crowned with ultimate success. He was enabled to obtain for himself that commendation of his Divine Master, "Thou hast laboured, and hast not fainted;" and the gracious promise was verified in his experience: "Be not weary in well-doing, for in due season ye shall reap, if ye faint not."

In 1802 my father made an attempt to recover the old Presbyterian meeting-house at Dartmouth, which had been built for the celebrated John Flavel, out of the hands of those who had sought to pervert it to the propagation of doctrinal error, which that excellent man—in common with his ejected brethren—held in utter abhorrence. Mr. Johnson was sent from Hoxton upon representations from an individual on the spot, that were considered favourable; but a most determined resistance being made, he was compelled to leave the town without preaching even once. To hinder his entering the chapel the doors were locked, and constables kept inside on the Lord's-day. Other means were also adopted to shut out the light of evangelical truth.

My father's letter to Mr. Johnson, upon information of this resistance being communicated to him, has been preserved. The following are extracts :—

"March 24, 1802. I felt much disappointed and grieved at the conduct of the people at Dartmouth when I read your letter. * * It is enough to make a heart of stone melt, to think of the awful situation of that town. You see there is need enough of the Gospel in our native country.

"I have been to consult Mr. Pellatt, an attorney, who loves Jesus and his cause. We both think it will be of no avail for you to continue there, because, from the violence of the opposition, it is not likely they will give up the keys, unless they are compelled in law. * * * However, I am glad that we have made the attempt; and I trust, if the chapel cannot in the end be obtained, that some temporary place will be procured, and endeavours made by evangelical ministers in the county to do something in that town.

"I am glad that you feel for the honour of the Redeemer, and see that his cause is of the utmost importance."

In a postscript he says: "Give my respects to Mr. Tanner [Mr. J.'s host] and his family. If Jesus takes notice of a cup of cold water given to one of his disciples, he will not forget their kindness to you."

Years passed away, but Dartmouth was not forgotten. One of the students, Mr. Thomas Stenner, having, toward the close of the year 1809, intimated to my father that it would be agreeable to him—should any congregation in Devonshire require a supply—to visit that county, his mind instantly recurred to the town and chapel of Flavel. He said, 'I will make inquiry whether there is now a possibility of obtaining admission to Dartmouth.' Soon after—probably the same day, he wrote to the late Rev. T. Windeatt, of Totnes, asking whether, if a student were sent, he would be received there. From the answer, it appeared that the time to favour Dartmouth was come.

About the time of Mr. Johnson's coming, a new lease of the chapel had been procured from the corporation, and a fresh set of trustees (including some individuals and their sons) appointed. Soon after the time now referred to, only four of these trustees were living, one of whom (the oldest) who had been the chief hinderance to the admission of the truth into the place, had now become much softened. On application being made to him by Mr. Windeatt, he at once consented to a young minister being sent under my father's direction. Inquiry was next made to ascertain what assistance the people at Dartmouth would render toward the support of a minister. The reply was, 'They can do nothing.' Mr. Stenner writes: "I remember well your father coming to my study with this letter. Having requested me to walk out into the garden with him, he read it to me, adding, after a short pause: 'What do you think of it now, Mr. Stenner?' In reply I said, 'I'll go and try the place, provided you will defray my travelling and incidental expenses for a time.' He at once said: 'I'll support you for twelve months.' Mr. S. continues—

"I accordingly came to this place at the close of the session in 1810. The chapel, which had been shut up for some years, was opened on the sabbath previous to my arrival by Mr. Windeatt. It was an appalling sight on the first sabbath to see the dilapidated state of the building—the walls green with damp—the seats scarcely fit to sit in, and the pulpit (as I thought) not safe to preach in. In the afternoon and evening, however, it was nearly filled. Your father, who visited Dartmouth about two months after, would have readily fulfilled his engagement to support me for twelve months, had it been requisite; but after a short time, it was proposed to let the seats, and sittings were taken to the amount of about sixty pounds per annum."

But although my father was very properly released from his engagement to support Mr. F. for a year, and only called upon for about twenty-eight pounds, he was always ready to contribute to the establishment and extension of the work at this place. On one occasion he advanced £75 on loan, in order to recover possession of an old house left for the minister, of which sum he afterwards remitted £49.

In 1840, nearly the whole of the old chapel was taken down, and a much larger building erected, capable of holding about 1000 persons, with upper galleries for nearly 300 Sabbath-school children, at a cost of upward of £1100. My father contributed £50 to this erection; and his heart was cheered in advanced life by seeing here, as well as elsewhere, the answer to his prayer: "Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory to their children: And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us, yea, the work of our hands, establish thou it."

The church at Dartmouth, which he was the means of planting, has been "a fruitful bough," whose branches have spread beyond that town. Churches have been raised and chapels built at two places in the neighbourhood—Dittisham and Stoke Fleming. Important aid has also been rendered toward the erection of chapels in other places around.

In the year 1806 my father was informed by several ministers that a Presbyterian meeting-house at Liskeard in Cornwall had been shut up some time, and that the person who held the keys would not permit any of the Independent ministers in the neighbourhood to preach in it. Mr. Wildbore, of Penryn, it appears, applied to him personally, and he promised to make an attempt toward the recovery of it, if Mr. W. would obtain for him the name and address of the person who kept possession. This was done, and a letter written accordingly; but no answer was received. My father, however, did not abandon his purpose. The late Dr. Pett, a physician at Clapton, had been mentioned to him as a gentleman who had formerly resided at Liskeard, and, after quitting that place, had continued a subscriber to the meeting-house; but having been informed that Dr. P. was a Unitarian, he was apprehensive that an application to him might be rather injurious than beneficial. Finding, however, that this was the only course open, he went to the Doctor, introducing himself as a relative of Mr. Remington (who was known to that gentleman,) and as the treasurer of Hoxton Academy, from which institution a minister might be sent to the place. Dr. Pett received him with great civility, and kindly undertook to write himself to the person who had not answered my father's letter. A reply was then soon obtained; and after some correspondence, an agreement was signed, making over the chapel to him for three years. Two of the Hoxton students were sent in succession to preach in it, and subsequently, a minister being settled there, the cause of God revived and flourished. A new chapel has since been built, and vested in trustees for the Congregational denomination.

CHAPTER XIII.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS ADDRESSED TO THE STUDENTS OF HOXTON ACADEMY, ILLUSTRATIVE OF MY FATHER'S KIND REGARD FOR THEIR WELFARE AND EARNEST CONCERN FOR THEIR MINISTERIAL EFFICIENCY.

My father was, from the time of his quitting business, in the habit of corresponding by letter with the students of Hoxton Academy during their temporary absence from the college, or shortly after they had left it and become pastors. Some of these earlier letters which have been preserved are of considerable length, and show his kind and almost paternal feelings toward them, as well as his earnest desire by all means to promote, in their future ministerial career, that which was the great aim of his own life—usefulness. The following are extracts from two letters addressed to Rev. Ingram Cobbin, then at South Molton:—

"July 12, 1799.—I have been visiting Mr. Hordle, at Harwich, for a few days. The work is promising there, and I hope the chapel will be enlarged next summer.* Upon my return, I found yours. I rejoice that your labours have been acceptable, and that you have taken the field. The texts were very suitable. Nothing but a total renunciation of self, and exaltation of the great Redeemer, will be blest. I dare say your present engagement will be of essential service to you as to future usefulness, although attended with some disadvantages. It is very important for ministers to be very careful what they say *out of* the pulpit. Much harm ensues from want of *prudence.*

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* See p. 216, ante.

" The great matter is, to obtain a sphere of usefulness. I hope the Lord will direct you.

" The call for ministers is great, particularly in the west of England. If you should see it your duty to remain, you could still go on with your studies. A great deal depends upon the disposition and application of young men after they leave the academy.

" I conversed with an irreligious person in the coach going to Harwich. He said the Methodists scarcely ever spoke against particular sins, such as lying, drunkenness, Sabbath-breaking, &c. Ministers cannot be too plain and faithful, provided they are not vulgar."

" 12 June, 1800.—I thank you for your kind letter of May 23rd. I have sent you some tracts, which I hope will be useful, and have enclosed some letters which we shall be obliged to you to direct, and get conveyed to the ministers in Devonshire.* The subject is of great importance, and the beneficial result from attention to it would be truly pleasing. I hope there are no poor children in your congregation, who are not taught to read. If there are, a Sunday-school is needful, and the Society in London would grant books.

" My situation at Hoxton is, indeed, harassing. I cannot help thinking that great good is likely to be promoted, or I would immediately give up my post. I have lately met with improper behaviour; but we must be mortified, and take up our cross.

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* The papers referred to were, I presume, copies of the Address on the Religious Instruction of Youth, referred to, p. 181, ante.

"I congratulate you on an agreeable partner in life, and hope you will long be spared as blessings to each other, and both promote the cause of the blessed Redeemer.

"I recommend that you take care of your health, and do not preach more than your strength will allow. I trust you will get much stronger, and then be sure to work harder. Mr. Smith, of Manchester, is quite laid aside through too much labour.

"I am glad your people are united and attached to you, and hope this will continue. Peace and love are of the utmost importance, and greatly depend upon a minister's good disposition, meekness, and prudence.

"I consider preaching in the evening [of the Lord's-day] preferable to the afternoon, and recommend it—at least, in the winter; but if the attempt to introduce it would cause uneasiness, you had better go on as before.

"Last Thursday I took Messrs. Barber and Simpson to the ordination of Mr. Smith, at Brentwood. The chapel was full, and so it is on the Sabbath. 'Who hath despised the day of small things?'* On Sabbath last Mrs. W. and I were at the opening of a new place of worship at Upminster by Mr. Douglas, of Chelmsford. It was a good day to me. He preached with affection and plainness, discovered a good knowledge of human nature, and spoke with wisdom. I see more and more the necessity of preaching experimentally, and in a manner suited to *do the people good*. Let all your subjects be regulated by usefulness, and speak to the conscience with affection and fidelity, otherwise little or no effect will follow.

"Give me leave to say, that it is very desirable for a minister to introduce *spiritual conversation* from house to house. Upon all common subjects, the less he speaks among members of the congregation, the better; for if the respect that should attach to a minister of Christ is lost, all is lost.

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* See pp. 213—215, ante.

"We have had application for a minister from Launceston, and your friend Cope is to be there for the vacation."*

The following are portions selected from letters to the late Rev. Joseph Johnson, of Farnham, who, after leaving Hoxton Academy, first settled at Warrington:—

"Sept. 2, 1802. I received yours yesterday, and am glad your labours have proved acceptable at Warrington. I am happy to give you the best advice I can, especially as I have found that you take it as proceeding from a desire for your benefit, and to promote your usefulness.

"I suppose you are satisfied with the prospect of doing good at that place. If this is the case, considering the unanimity of both church and congregation, I am inclined to think it may be your duty to *accept* their invitation, and to remain. I recommend you to consult Mr. Sharp and Mr. Roby.†

"You may persevere [in your general studies] by a determined resolution to devote to them some time every day. As Mr. Mason said, 'Academies should only be considered as implements put into your hands to dig for wisdom.' You will find it necessary to be very diligent in your study, as well as zealous in the pulpit. Let me advise you to pray much, to read much, and to think much. Do everything by rule. Visit only in the *afternoon*, and call on the poor as well as the rich. Do not take supper out, and very seldom dine out.

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* This visit led to the settlement at this place of Mr. [now Dr.] Cope, who thus writes: "It was at your father's earnest solicitation that I consented to go to Launceston. He often afterwards expressed his delight and gratitude to God, that my settlement there had proved so prosperous. It was through his assistance that I formed the first Sunday-school in the county of Cornwall, from which arose many others in the villages around."

† Two neighbouring ministers, Rev. I. Sharp, of St. Helen's, and Rev. W. Roby, of Manchester.

"You must attend to the rising generation. Those who cannot read should be taught on the Sabbath; those who can read, should receive religious instruction.

"I advise you to give notice some Sabbath evening, that you will preach on another fixed evening on the importance of attending public worship, after which a small tract will be given at the door to every one present. If you will inform me how many the chapel will hold, I will send you a sufficient number of the tract entitled 'A Persuasive to Public Worship.' You would do well to go into the houses of the poor—especially of those who attend no place of worship, and talk with them as we find from Acts v. 42, the apostles in every house, as well as in the temple, 'ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.'

"Next to the Bible, let your text-book be the human heart. Study its depravity and wickedness, and observe its various deceitful workings. By talking with unconverted men on religious subjects, you will learn how to preach experimentally.

"It would be desirable that you preach in the evenings during the summer, in the villages around."

"May 12, 1804. It gives me much pleasure to find that the Lord is succeeding your labours, and that he is giving you to feel your own unworthiness. This is a favourable token that he designs to work by your instrumentality; 'for he giveth grace unto the humble.' What words are those of the apostle Paul: 'Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.'

"When I sent the last account of the Academy, I was so much engaged in directing and forwarding a great number that I could not write.

"If you should hear of or meet with any pious gifted young men, let them be encouraged to enter some of our seminaries."

"June 22, 1804. One of our late students informs me that a brother of yours goes to preach in the villages round Northampton. The object of my writing now is, to say that we are in want of more students at Hoxton. If your brother is truly pious, and possesses suitable gifts, I think it would be desirable for you to recommend him to make application without delay.* I wish ministers would watch those who take part in their prayer-meetings, and encourage young men [to prepare] for the work. The most suitable are frequently the most backward.

"Wishing you health, and much success in winning souls to Christ, I remain," &c.

"Aug. 13, 1804. I trust in your preaching you embrace the *whole Bible,* and mix doctrinal, experimental, and practical truth. I fear that many hearers approve of declarations of a free salvation, but not of exhortations to holiness of heart and life, growth in grace, and the duties of Christianity upon evangelical principles. I once heard Mr. Pentycross say, 'It is impossible to be legal if Christ is the foundation.' The end must never be separated from the means. The difference between natural and moral inability should be carefully explained, as stated by Fuller, 'On the Duty of all Men to believe the Gospel.'

"It will be of little use to preach Christ, unless human depravity and sin in all their forms are exposed, and the work of the blessed Spirit is enforced. Faith must be known by its effects, as the tree is known by its fruit. We are exhorted to add to our faith, virtue, &c. We are yet under the law to Christ as a rule of obedience, though not under it as a covenant of works. There is a false and dangerous taste in many places which does much mischief, and should be opposed—avoiding all extremes.

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* Mr. Stephen Johnson, the person referred to, was admitted into Hoxton Academy in 1804, and proved an acceptable and useful minister.

"That the Lord may abundantly succeed your labours is the prayer of," &c.

Nothing gave my father greater pleasure than to take by the hand a young man who, he had reason to believe, sincerely desired to devote himself to the ministerial work; to "encourage" and cheer him on in the high walk of usefulness which he had chosen. Where delicate health seemed to interpose a barrier in that course, he would take all means to hinder a hasty decision, and endeavour to find a station where the labour would be light, and the air salubrious. In such cases, he wrote in a strain which showed that he could be not only kind, but also delicately considerate of feelings. Some extracts from a series of letters to one of the earlier Hoxton students will furnish ample proof of this fact.

After the opening of the new chapel at Hoxton, it became a law of the academy that the students should preach there in rotation on Thursday evenings. My father constantly attended this weekly service, carefully observed the young preacher's manner of speaking and mode of treating the subject he had selected; and if he noticed anything in style, address, arrangement of thought, or doctrinal statement which appeared to him defective or erroneous, he would, at a private interview, freely and plainly mention it. To a young man of sensitive mind just entering on the work it may well be supposed that this would sometimes be painful, however salutary and beneficial. The following letter, addressed to the individual referred to, under these circumstances, will show the spirit in which my father acted, and prove that nothing was more remote from his intention than to inflict a wound, or to "cause grief."

"Dec. 8, 1801. I was very sorry to find that the observations that struck me when you preached at Hoxton, and which I took the liberty of communicating to you since, have had a tendency to discourage you.

"I am sure I did not intend to hurt your feelings, and wish I could have spoken with more softness. My only inducement was, that I think all young ministers may be benefited by the free and kind remarks of their real friends. I am fully sensible that all the students (particularly the more diffident) preach under great disadvantages at the chapel on a Thursday evening, and that every allowance should be made for them. . . . . .

"Be assured, my dear sir, that I have the highest opinion of your piety and abilities, and am fully satisfied that the Lord will make you a blessing in his church. Take courage, and go forward. Had we as many more students, they would all be wanted. That you may be enabled to preach with all boldness and much affection, with the Holy Ghost, and with power, is the prayer of," &c.

"Aug. 17, 1802. I was very sorry to find your health was not recruited by country air. From the account you give of yourself, it is evidently your duty to remain longer among your relatives, for without health you cannot make improvement in your studies. We must submit to the will of God; although the calls for ministers are abundant. . . . . . .

"I lament that you have had so many groundless fears and perplexities in the work of preaching. . . . . . Had I known how sensitive you were to every discouragement, I should not have said what I once did. Your prudence, good sense, and piety I always admired, and I doubt not, if it pleases God to restore you, that you will be useful, though it may not be in the largest sphere of action.

"I hope the Lord will re-establish your health, and sanctify your present indisposition."

"Nov. 3, 1803. I have been this week at Tunbridge. I conversed with Messrs. ———, and strongly recommended you to them, thinking, as they are willing to have only twice preaching on the Sabbath, that it would suit your present state of health. The chapel is remarkably easy to speak in, and is sufficiently lofty. I think an agreeable, prudent, pious minister might increase the little flock there. It is the intention of these gentlemen to invite you for a month, with which I hope you will comply, in order to see the leadings of Divine Providence . . . . . . I flatter myself your former ideas in favour of the connexion of church and state are vanished."

"Oct. 19, 1803. I was glad to receive a letter from you—am fearful you will think me long in answering it, but I have been much engaged.

"It would have given me the greatest pleasure had I found your health improved, and that you were able to work in the Lord's vineyard. But it is the Lord; and he will do right. Sometimes he chooses his people, and keeps them in the furnace of affliction. Mr. Trail says, 'God may take anything from believers but his mercy; and they may spare anything but his mercy!'

"Perhaps by care and rest you may gain strength. If you thought preaching two short sermons in the week would not be very injurious, I would still recommend Dorking, or Reigate, or Tunbridge. If you are afraid to attempt this during the winter, I hope you will be able to try it in the spring. I trust, if it pleases God, you will still keep in view preaching the everlasting Gospel.

"In regard to the question, whether you should labour as a Dissenter or a Churchman, I think the way is plain. I see no foundation for a national church in the New Testament; and, on account of the riches and patronage of our establishment, I see much mischief done to the cause of vital religion. How can you get over the Baptismal, Confirmation, Absolution, and Burial Services? . . . . . Happy should I be to render you any service. If you can point out in what way, favour me with a letter at any time.

"I trust the Lord will keep you near to himself, and afford you those consolations which the world can neither give nor take away."

"May 7, 1804. I am afraid you will think me in some degree negligent in not sooner acknowledging your kind letter of the 25th ult. However, you know my engagements. I was glad to find your health was so far improved that you could go through the duties of your close confinement [in a school]; especially that you still feel a prevailing desire to be useful in the ministry. I hope nothing will overcome this, if your health is established. As it was the pleasure of the Lord, that was to prosper in the hand of Christ, so it is peculiarly his pleasure that the Gospel should be preached to every creature.

"We are using the chapel in Upper Hoxton morning and afternoon for six Sabbaths. Our own place will be wider and higher, with side galleries. You know what sort of preaching is likely, with the blessing of God, to fill it.

"We have obtained the consent of Dr. Williams' trustees to send two of our students to finish at Glasgow, with the allowance of £25 each per annum, but have not fixed upon the persons.

"I hope you will soon be so much better as to leave your present situation; for I fear, lest the effect of a long cessation from preaching, should be, your at last declining the important and honourable work. If I can render you any assistance, I shall be happy to do so at any time."

"June 23, 1804. If you do not go to Tunbridge for more than one Sabbath, it might be useful to your health to visit the sea. At Hastings, I am informed there are 4000 persons perishing for lack of knowledge. In 1799 Sir Egerton Leigh took a house there on lease, and fitted up a part for preaching. After he left, there was much opposition, and it has for some time been shut up. I wish you could make a trial in that place. I would engage support for one year. You see I wish to catch at anything to promote the cause of the blessed Redeemer."

"Sept. 14, 1804. I am sorry to find that you have been so unwell as to fear you may be compelled to relinquish the ministry. Before you quite give up, I wish you would make a trial at Hastings, where the sea air and bathing might be very useful. Mr. Thomas leaves next week, and the place must, I believe, be shut up, unless you will go. It would rejoice me to write to-morrow to inform Mr. T. of your succeeding him.

"He that winneth souls is wise. I should be sorry the cause should lose your services, unless it evidently appeared to be the will of God; because men are perishing in ignorance and sin."

"Sept. 15, 1804. I am happy to find that you are willing to make trial of Hastings, and I do hope there will be much good done in that dark town."

"Nov. 21, 1804. It affords me and Mrs. Wilson much pleasure that you are desirous of following the guidance of Providence. 'In the multitude of counsellors there is safety.' It is a serious thing, having begun to serve God in an active manner, to go back, so as not to walk any more in that way. He that loveth father or mother, wife or sister, more than Christ is not worthy of him. I confess I had some fear of your quite giving up the ministry, but now I hope better things."

The extract which immediately follows will show my father's views as to the necessity of a child-like submission to the great doctrines of the Christian faith:—

"January 22, 1805. Is it not alarming to set our depraved understandings in opposition to the express declarations of God's word? How true is it, that unless we are converted and become teachable and submissive as little children, we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven! God teaches all his people to feel and acknowledge their *original* and actual depravity and guilt; then they clearly see that they must perish, unless interested in the salvation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—three Persons in the ever-adorable Trinity. Unless you are preserved in making these grand points the soul of all your ministry, I could not wish you to remain in it. It is certainly true, the natural man understandeth not the things of God, because they are spiritually discerned. Christ is God over all, blessed for evermore. In his righteousness alone can we be justified. These convictions produced by the Holy

Spirit will enable us to love Christ supremely, ardently, constantly.

"I write from the purest affection, and am sure you will receive it as designed. None can wish your happiness more than I do, but it can only be expected while we act from a regard to the will of God, and with a single eye to his glory."

"Feb. 28, 1805. The contents of yours received this morning still confirm my conviction, that *we* know little or nothing of the path of duty in reference to fixing the precise stations of God's ministers. A boys' school is very confining and fatiguing, and is in general injurious to the usefulness of a minister, whose heart and soul, time and strength, ought to be devoted to the sacred work."

"May 23, 1805. I was glad to receive a line from you, and to find the Lord in some measure supports your mind under your great loss. In such trying dispensations, the Christian can go to his God, and pour out his soul unto him. 'He is a refuge for us.' Let me particularly recommend you to check immoderate grief, and that dull, low state which too often attends it. Remember how David acted on the loss of his child —also the Shunammite: she answered, 'It is well.' Surely the Lord has done this for spiritual good to yourself, and thus to make you a more useful minister. The evil of sin, the vanity of the world, the importance of the work of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, will appear to you in all their force; and when you preach, it will be feelingly and experimentally. So that if God be glorified, and sinners saved, you will have reason to say, 'His gentleness [gentle hand of affliction] hath made me great.'* It is your duty to use all means to preserve health and spirits, and I trust Bristol will prove salutary.

"I think it was a kind Providence which sent you a call to an important station, before you were left alone; and now it appears the path of duty that you should accept it. I trust on your return the hand of the Lord will be with you, that you may be the instrument of the conversion of many souls, and of increasing the congregation, that there may be a revival of *the power of religion.*

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* See p. 87, ante.

"Mr. Adam says, in his Posthumous Works, 'Submission to the will of God, with experience of his support in pain, sickness, affliction, is a more joyous and happy state than any degree of health or worldly prosperity."

The reader will not need to be reminded that the writer of these letters, in acting the part of a monitor and friendly adviser to young ministers, knew how to be at once faithful and kind—might I not even say tender?

The following are portions of two letters to Mr. Salt,* a student from Hoxton Academy, then lately settled at Lichfield.

"May 21, 1808. I received both your letters, and they have really given me pleasure, and afforded some encouragement: for I have many difficulties. * * * You are following the leadings of Providence, and are encouraged in your work. May you enjoy great nearness to God, and labour for souls as one that must give an account! It is the diligent hand which maketh rich. I trust the time, the set time is come to favour Lichfield with the free proclamation of the Gospel. It is an important station, and doubtless you will reap, if you faint not. Satan will be very active to injure the work in some way or other, particularly to draw you aside. May you not be ignorant of his devices ! *

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* Rev. W. Salt, now of Hinckley.

" I wish we may hear of some suitable situation for ———. He is a valuable young man, but wants animation. Much certainly depends on a lively address; aiming to gain the attention, and affectionately applying everything to the conscience and experience. I doubt not that you feel the importance of constantly keeping in view the grand doctrines of the Gospel—the fall and the recovery. The great evil is—people are living in sin, yet are ignorant of its evil. The first thing is, to convince men of sin. Is not this to be done by explaining the holy law of God? " By the law is the knowledge of sin." " The law is our schoolmaster, to bring us to Christ." Nothing should be taken for granted without explanation; for numbers do not understand the meaning of many terms in common acceptation among ministers. Particular sins should be mentioned, and all traced to their source—*the heart,* which is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

Nov. 21, 1808. [Referring to the circumstance mentioned in the note below] " I have been with Rev. G. Burder this morning. He has engaged to write a reply to the 'Warning.'* You must circulate a thousand copies—getting a person upon whom you can depend, to leave one at every house.

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* My father seems to have written almost prophetically. The young minister addressed was mercifully preserved from being drawn aside by those temptations against which he was paternally warned in the following sentences; but it appeared, only a few months after the date of this letter, that the great adversary of God and man had been "very active" in stirring up the spirits of certain persons to injure the work of God. A young man who had been present at one of the parish churches in the afternoon of Lord's-day, Nov. 6, 1808, attended in the evening the service at the Independent Chapel in Lichfield, and heard a sermon preached there by Mr. Salt from Luke xxii. 61, 62. On the next day this young man committed suicide, and the "verdict" of the jury who sat on the coroner's inquest ascribed his *lunacy* to the effect produced on his mind by " the doctrines which he had heard at the meetings of persons called Methodists." This attempt, however, of the great calumniator, the accuser of the brethren, to hinder—turned out rather " to the furtherance of the Gospel."

"I have no doubt all will be overruled for great good. May it stir you up to cleave more closely to God, to be more earnest in prayer, to study the Scriptures with greater ardour, referring to Henry and others of our best commentators, and delivering the grand truths of the Gospel with great zeal, and much affectionate application to the experience and conscience of all! I trust this bustle will be a great help toward a new chapel in Lichfield. It surely should hasten the building and induce the greatest liberality on the part of those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

"You have arrived at high honour—to suffer for Christ. He will help and encourage you; Matt. v. 11, 'He is stronger than the strong man armed.'"

Mr. Salt writes: "Your late honoured father took a deep interest in this event, and afforded me much encouragement, as well as counsel and sympathy. Some time after, when I took the chapel case to London, he requested me to preach the notorious 'killing' sermon at Hoxton chapel. At the close he stood forward and spoke to this effect: 'My friends, the sermon you have just heard, has been charged by the verdict of a jury in Lichfield as the cause of urging a young man to suicide. You can judge whether it has that tendency, and how much the

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* This was shortly afterward published under the title "A Vindication of the Dissenters in Lichfield, from the charges brought against them in a paper entitled, 'A Serious Warning to the Inhabitants of that city: with an Appendix on Religious Melancholy.'"

Gospel is needed in that city to enlighten the people. Mr. Salt is now in London collecting money to build a new chapel there.' "

He then invited persons disposed to contribute, to go into the vestry after the service was concluded. A considerable sum was thus obtained.*

My father's desire that the young ministers who were sent from Hoxton Academy should be not only faithful and diligent pastors, energetic and impressive preachers to their own congregations, but also zealous evangelists and house teachers, will farther appear from the following passages of letters to Mr. Clunie, then at Guildford, in Surrey.†

"July 7, 1808. I received your kind letter, and am much pleased to find that the Lord inclines you to make every exertion for his cause at Guildford. The Redeemer must triumph at last, and he has promised to be with his ministers to the end of the world. The diligent hand is sure to succeed with patience and perseverance. The nearer you live to God, the more may you expect that your preaching will be with the Holy Ghost and with power. Be sure you try the most effectual means of gaining the attention, and affecting the heart. Think what zeal and animation do in our courts of law . . . . . You can never exalt Jesus too highly, or insist too much on the Holy Spirit's influences.

"Village preaching is very important. Get a knowledge of all [places] within six miles, and try what can be done to introduce the Gospel. If you can get any poor persons in the out-parts of Guildford to invite some of their neighbours, and let you preach in their houses, who can tell what good might ensue?

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* In a letter to Mr. Salt, dated February 10, 1838, my father writes: "It is gratifying to learn that the chapel at Lichfield is filled; I hope in time a better one will be built."

† Rev. Dr. Clunie, now of Manchester.

"You might give notice of preaching on the importance of family religion, and introduce the subject of baptism.

"My dear sir, consider the value of an immortal soul; preach with eternity in view, and may you prove a burning and shining light!"

"January 5, 1809. The first requisite of a useful minister is a close walk with God—to be eminently spiritual, and to have a conversation as it becometh the Gospel—to feel the grand realities of an eternal state. Then will follow those important qualities—prudence, firmness, and zeal in the sacred work; that the whole soul may be engaged, and that all suitable means may be used to win souls to Christ. Little good will be done without energy of delivery, and pointed application to the conscience. The word preached should come with power and demonstration of the Holy Spirit. May great grace rest upon you!

"Wishing you many happy and useful years, I remain," &c.

CHAPTER XIV.

CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH MY FATHER BECAME AN OCCASIONAL PREACHER—FORMATION OF THE BIBLE SOCIETY—HIS EXPOSURE TO SEVERE REFLECTIONS—THREATENED LEGAL PROCEEDINGS—CONGREGATIONAL UNION—LABOURS IN CONNEXION WITH THE CHAPEL AT HOXTON—COLLECTION OF HYMNS.*

No reader will be surprised to learn, that with my father's views as to the paramount importance of preaching the Gospel as the grand means for the renovation and salvation of his fellow-men, he should himself become an occasional preacher. Yet he did not rashly intrude himself into a new department of service. He entered upon this as upon other means of usefulness, as he was introduced, and gradually led forward by the providence of God, to which he looked for guidance in all his movements.

I have reason to believe that it was in the summer of 1804 he first addressed a village congregation. The following are the circumstances which led to his taking this step. He was at Buxton, in Derbyshire—a place which he frequently visited on his way to or from Manchester,* and boarded at an hotel where Mr. James Haldane, of Edinburgh, was then staying. Mr. H., during his sojourn there, went on the Lord's-days to preach in the neighbourhood. Being suddenly called away, he was unable to fulfil an engagement which he had made for the following sabbath to preach at Chelmerton—a village several miles from Buxton; but before quitting that place, he urged, and almost constrained my father to undertake the service. His consent was not obtained without considerable reluctance. He had no theological books with him, and not even access to a concordance; but he had the one Book for a preacher, with which he had long been intimately conversant, and he wisely determined to select—as a subject of his address, a familiar text, containing a plain statement of the great doctrine of salvation. The passage which he fixed upon was

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* It may be proper to remind the reader that I have deviated from the strict chronological arrangement, in order to preserve what I consider, in some cases, a preferable distribution of materials, by reducing distinct subjects to separate heads, and placing the matter relating to them in separate portions.

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* In the Evangelical Magazine for December, 1802, p. 492, is inserted a short letter to the Editor signed T. W., of which my father was the writer: it thus commences—

"Dear Sir, I spent a few weeks during the last summer at Buxton—a place much resorted to, both on account of its mineral waters and salubrious air. In walking up one of the surrounding hills above Pool's Hole, I went into a cottage made in the lime-stone rock, where an old couple reside rent-free. I conversed upon religious matters with the husband, whom I found like all men by nature, ignorant of the way of salvation, relying on his prayers, repentance," &c. He then introduces the copy of a faithful affectionate letter from the wife's son by a former marriage, to his mother—affording a remarkable instance of the sovereign, distinguishing grace of God, his brother having been transported for housebreaking.

1 Tim. i. 15: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Although not without the confidence inspired by a sense of duty and a providential call, he went with some degree of trepidation. After he had commenced his address, however, he soon acquired courage, so as to speak boldly, and when he had advanced toward the close was surprised to find how much time had elapsed. He said within himself, 'I can do this again;' and from that day became an occasional preacher. Although never forward to obtrude his services, yet he did not need pressing when called upon and requested to engage in this work in future years. He was always ready, in the absence of a minister, to give a short address at a prayer-meeting, or to supply a village chapel, and for many years he took his turn with three other gentlemen in preaching once a month to the inmates of the London Female Penitentiary, Pentonville—an institution in which he had taken a lively interest from its formation early in 1807. In the later years of his life he occasionally accepted the invitation of a minister in a small town, to supply his pulpit on the Lord's-day. I have reason to believe, and, in reference to one place, I can speak from personal knowledge of the fact, that his plain, free, and familiar, but solemn, earnest, and energetic addresses were generally acceptable, and in some instances useful in the highest sense of the word. He was honoured to be a spiritual father to several

individuals, to whom he might say, "I have begotten you through the Gospel."

The practice of what is commonly called lay-preaching—or, as our fathers would describe it, the public teaching of the word by gifted brethren—is one that has always been recognised, and, under proper regulations and restrictions, encouraged by the Congregational churches in England. It has received the double sanction of apostolical practice and primitive usage. Dr. Owen, in his 'Enquiry into the Original, Nature, &c., of Evangelical Churches,'* speaks with high commendation of the Second Apology for the Christians, written by the learned philosopher Justin Martyr, about the year 150, to the Roman emperors Antoninus Pius, and Lucius. He gives the following account of some heads of it:

> "He declares the conversion of men unto faith as the foundation of all their church order and worship.
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> "The only means of conversion which he insists upon, is—the preaching of the Gospel. This preaching of the word, or declaration of the truth of the Gospel unto the conversion of the hearers, he doth not confine unto any especial sort of persons, as he doth afterwards that administration of the holy things in the church; but speaks of it in general, as the work of all Christians that were able for it, as doth the Apostle, 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25."†

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* 4to. 1681, pp. 105—107.

† "But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, he is convicted by all," &c. To this passage might be added several others—particularly Acts viii. 4: "They that were scattered abroad [by the per-

I need not add that my father, in thus becoming and continuing, nearly to the end of his life, an occasional preacher of the Gospel, did nothing which can require vindication or apology, at least from those who reverence the Scripture, or respect primitive antiquity.

My father was a member of the committee of the Religious Tract Society at the time when frequent deliberations were held among its members, which led to the formation of another noble institution—sublime in the simplicity of its object—The British and Foreign Bible Society. In a room upon the premises of the late Joseph Hardcastle, Esq., near London bridge, in which that committee held its meetings, the purpose was formed, and the plan not only originated, but also "advanced far toward its mature state." "After much preparation, in which the parties belonging to the Tract Society did not publicly appear,"[*] a meeting was called at the London Tavern on March 7, 1804, at which the new Society was formed. About 300 persons belonging to various denominations attended, and £700 were subscribed. My father's donation of £20 was presented this year,[†] constituting him a

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secution that arose against the church at Jerusalem] went everywhere *preaching the word*." Philip. i. 14, "Many of *the brethren in the Lord* waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold *to speak the word* without fear."

[*] Memoir of Rev. Geo. Burder, p. 234. The late Rev. John Townsend says, "In those favoured rooms was brought forth that gigantic agent of moral and spiritual good—the British and Foreign Bible Society." Memoirs of Rev. John Townsend, 1828, p. 66.

[†] In the year 1833 he gave £30, thus increasing his original contribution to £50.

life-member. He was not a member of the *first* committee of this great Society, but his name appears in the list of that which was chosen for the next year, (1805.) That he considered himself one of its auxiliary founders appears from his own expression in a letter dated January 16, 1837, "I took a part *at the commencement* of the Bible Society;" and that he felt a lively interest in its early progress and rapid extension appears from the notice he takes of it in a letter to the late Rev. Joseph Johnson, dated May 12, 1804, in which he expresses great pleasure at the formation of this new Society, which, he adds, "is likely to be attended with much good, and is encouraged by all denominations — even Quakers. Already from £1500 to £2000 has been raised. Christ must reign, and his kingdom be established. Even so, Amen."

The Bible Society has been the instrument of effecting an incalculable amount of direct good, by placing the Holy Scriptures in the hands of millions in the British dominions, and enabling the most remote nations to read in their own tongues the wonderful works of God; but the incidental benefits resulting from its rapid development and gigantic growth have not been inconsiderable. Not only have different religious denominations, previously discordant and divided, been harmonised and brought to unite in this work of the Lord—disseminating his word in all directions around them, and even to the ends of the world—a united testimony has also been borne to the great principle laid down by Chillingworth, 'The Bible, the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants.' Practical homage has thus been paid to the sole authority and sufficiency of the Scriptures; various sects, however they may be attached to their respective creeds and catechisms, have consented to lay them aside, that *God's book* may be trusted by itself without human guards—thus proving their strong and deliberate conviction that "the Holy Scriptures," unaccompanied with any supplementary documents, "are able to make men wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

"Censure is the tax which a man pays to the public for being eminent." Some portion of this tax was levied upon my father, for even the man who aspires to be eminently good must not expect altogether to escape, nor wonder if his good be sometimes evil-spoken of. He has inserted among his extracts the following notice concerning some eminent physician, (probably Boerhaave.) "He never regarded calumny or detraction, nor ever thought it necessary to confute them. They are sparks, said he, which if you do not blow them, will go out of themselves. The sure remedy against scandal, is to live it down by a perseverance in well-doing." I believe he adopted through life this principle in reference to the lighter manifestations of calumny in flying rumours and reports; but when it assumed the palpable form of specific charges affecting his public character, he deemed it to require distinct notice and formal refutation.

He has related some particulars of a curious interview which took place in the year 1804. When endeavouring to obtain new subscribers for Hoxton Academy he called upon a gentleman in the city—who, it appears, was one of those who are more disposed to find fault, and hinder, than to help forward a good cause. This person first objected to the inadequate amount of learning communicated to the students. After being met on this point he shifted his ground, and alleged that the committee of that institution were causing divisions in churches, referring in proof to a particular case at Dorking—where preaching was then carried on in a room chiefly by students from Hoxton Academy, the minister of the meeting-house being a man of notoriously immoral conduct, who refused to resign the pulpit.

My father, who knew all the facts of this case, acting in the spirit of that ancient saying, "Strike, but hear," was about to enter into a statement by way of explanation, but his fierce accuser proved that he was no impartial judge, by refusing to hear what the accused party had to say in reply to his charge, under the pretence that he *had not time.* My father very properly insisted upon his right to be heard in his own defence, but offered—should the present time be inconvenient—to defer entering upon it till a future day. He called shortly afterward upon this meek reprover, and with some difficulty—although not without frequent interruptions—obtained a hearing, when the censor was compelled to acknowledge that he had not understood the real facts and circumstances of the case. But although answered, and to some extent convinced, he was not silenced. He next had recourse to personal reflections, the first of which, and the only one that I shall notice was, 'You are an enthusiast.' My father says, "I took no notice of this, thinking it rather an honour than a disgrace." So far from being ashamed, he rather gloried in a degree of zeal and ardour which subjected him to the charge of enthusiasm. "It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing;" and my father, rejoicing to suffer shame for that which was in fact his glory, determined to prosecute his useful and self-denying labours "through evil report and good report."

I may introduce here a circumstance which occurred in 1807, relative to the minister at Dorking referred to in the preceding statement. My father was one of the trustees of an endowment left by a clergyman for the benefit of the Nonconformist minister both at that place and at Guildford. Knowing the real facts, he was desirous of getting him removed if possible—especially as (to use his own words) "he was frequently in London begging for himself, stating falsely that he was injured and persecuted, and making free with my name." Hearing more unfavourable accounts of his character from Dorking, my father wrote to a person at Wallingford, where this minister had been settled before, and shortly after received a printed letter, being a copy of one written by Lady Huntingdon, dismissing him from her connexion for lying and drunkenness. Knowing that Mr. M., a Baptist minister of some notoriety at that time in London, one of the distributors of the parliamentary grant to poor Dissenting ministers—commonly called the Regium donum—had given this unworthy person a portion of the funds confided to him for distribution, he felt it his duty to inform that gentleman of the fact which had been communicated to him. Mr. M. determined to go to Dorking with two other persons—one of them an Independent minister in the city, to inquire into the particulars. He requested my father to communicate to him in writing the facts which he had heard. Placing confidence in the honour of this individual, he unwarily complied with the request. The above parties instituted an examination, and several witnesses deposed to circumstances which could leave no reasonable doubt that the charges were too true—if not also another of a flagrant character. Although they declined to support the minister, Mr. M. most ungenerously placed my father's letter in the hands of a solicitor—a member of his congregation, who gave notice that, unless the matter were settled by arbitration, proceedings at law would be commenced. My father consented to an arbitration, but a year elapsed before it took place. Two arbitrators were chosen on each side, but the solicitor refused to allow them to choose a fifth. Several witnesses were brought up from Dorking and Wallingford. Among them was Lady Huntingdon's secretary, who proved sending the letter of dismission by her ladyship's order, and produced a copy of it, entered in his private book.

For want of an umpire, there was not a formal decision; but no legal proceedings were instituted. The late James Davies, Esq., of Hackney, one of my father's arbitrators, who showed great ability in conducting the inquiry, administered some sharp but not undeserved reproof to the solicitor who acted for Mr. M., concluding thus—"I am convinced, even from your own evidence, that Mr. Wilson was fully justified in all he wrote to Mr. M."

At Clare, in Suffolk, the congregation at an old meeting-house had been reduced to an extremely low state. Application was made at midsummer 1804, to Hoxton Academy, and a student was sent for the vacation. The chapel, which will hold 400 persons, was filled—and another student, who preached for some months, toward the end of the year, was remarkably useful in establishing a large Sunday-school. My father paid a visit to this place in 1805. Finding that there was no weekly meeting for social prayer, he requested the minister to give notice that such a meeting would be held on the Monday evening, when the conversion of a notoriously wicked person would be related. At this meeting he read in manuscript an account—afterward published in a tract entitled 'The Female Vagrant,' which arrested the conscience of a person present, whose case was, in one respect, similar, and led to a determination to forsake sin—which it appears, by a letter from that place, dated April 8, 1809, was carried into effect. The writer, addressing my father, says:

"Dear Sir, I am requested to present to you the united thanks of the church and congregation in this place, for the many kind proofs you have manifested of concern for the cause of Christ here. Many will not forget your kind visit—which, I trust, was not only pleasing, but profitable—particularly to one person; for the account you read on Monday evening produced conviction in her mind. She has been a constant attendant since, and we have reason to hope there is some good thing in her toward the Lord God of Israel. Through the assistance of yourself and other friends we have supplied with the Gospel, and I trust many have felt its power."

I shall insert the next fact in the words of my informant, Rev. Ingram Cobbin:

"Mr. Wilson was a decided foe to the Antinomians. He never gave them any quarter. A church that had been pestered for years with trustees of this description, who had been the bane of its peace, and the torture of its pastors—solicited Mr. W. when travelling their way, to give them a sermon. This was soon after he had commenced occasional preaching, and the attraction was great, to hear a *squire* preach. Having previously ascertained the still troubled state of the church, and its usual cause, when he had finished his discourse, he addressed the people in language to this purport: 'My friends, I find that you are still troubled with Antinomian trustees who have long plagued this congregation. My advice is, separate from them. I will send you a minister. Fit up any place capable of holding the congregation, and leave the trustees to their bare walls. Do not fear support; I will guarantee your minister £100 for the first year, and God will bless your effort!' The congregation readily took the hint: they only needed a leader. A warehouse, on the ground floor, was handsomely fitted up, and for seven years a worthy and zealous minister laboured usefully among them. The Antinomians, in the mean time, had supplies to their own hearts' content, not always of the best character, and at length their pews were wholly emptied. They gave in. The chapel was vested in proper trustees, and Mr. Wilson's experiment accomplished what other means had failed to do for more than twenty years."

From three letters addressed to Mr. Cobbin while at this place, I may select the following passages:

"Feb. 6, 1806. It is awful to think of the mischief done in many churches for want of proper deeds of trust, and a proper place for keeping them safe, where they may be seen at any time.

"I hope you will not desert your post, but that you will with meekness, prudence, and perseverance, guide the barque through the storm. If I could really be of use I would not refuse to visit B——. What an imperfect polluted world this is! May we seek our happiness more immediately from God himself! I trust these troubles will work together for your good."

"Mar. 1, 1806. I congratulate you on the important victory gained over ——— Now almost everything will depend upon conciliation and prudence on your part. You will have reason to be thankful for the experience you have gained. Be remarkably kind to all, say nothing to aggravate, but endeavour to heal every breach. Almost everything depends upon the spirit and conduct of the minister. You may be quite happy, and more than ever useful at B——, if you act with discretion."

May 17, 1806, a meeting of ministers and others was held at Paul's Coffee-house to consider the propriety of a general union of the Congregational ministers and churches throughout the kingdom. A committee was formed in London, consisting of eleven ministers and twenty-three lay gentlemen, by which an address was prepared and published to the ministers and churches of the Congregational order. My father had the honour of being one of those who first engaged in this noble effort to roll away the reproach which had too long attached to the churches of this denomination—that they were a disjointed, disorganised aggregation, a mere "rope of sand," without connexion or continuity.*

The charge has been exaggerated and pushed beyond the point that truth and justice will warrant, but still there has been and is too much ground to justify the allegation.

The great want of what my father used to call "our denomination" was and is—coherence and consolidation. United counsel and action for great common purposes, concert and combination leading to harmonious co-operation, are the great desiderata. The problem to be solved is—How are these to be practically attained without interference with the liberty of the individual churches or infringement of their independence?

Union is strength; the fable of the bundle of sticks is equally applicable to churches as to members of a family. If these separate portions, instead of being a mere heap of loose fragments, could be cemented and consolidated into a firm compact mass, a coherent and consistent whole, how much greater would be their power and efficiency for practical results! How might the things that are ready to die be strengthened, and that which is now done for the general good of the denomination and the advancement of the cause of Christ, without method or order, consequently in a desultory and fitful manner, be much more effectually accomplished, and at the same time, according to the apostolical precept, be "done decently, and in order," by being performed according to some wisely-concerted plan, comprehending a general arrangement, adopted as the result of conviction, from deliberate choice and preference. This, indeed, is a consummation devoutly to be wished, and, I firmly believe, not impracticable.

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* "A principle of disunion seems interwoven with the Independent plan, when carried to its full extent."—Rev. John Scott's Letters and Papers, p. 246.

My father took a lively interest in this attempt at organised concert and general co-operation. In a letter dated May 21, 1808, he says: "We are likely to get on in the Congregational Union;" but the pleasing prospect was speedily overclouded, and from various causes, which I shall not attempt to explain, or even to enumerate, the design was abandoned. The late Rev. Geo. Burder, who had taken an active part in it from the first, in recording this lamentable failure of a noble attempt, thus writes: "The influential ministers kept back, and the matter was dropped, much to the injury of the cause of religion—especially among the Independents. I told them other denominations would reap the advantage of our want of union, and we should suffer. Future ministers will, I hope, be wiser."*

The chapel at Hoxton, opened in 1800, was soon found too small to accommodate the increasing congregation. In 1801 a front gallery was erected. In the spring of 1804 the chapel was widened fifteen feet, the walls were raised seven feet: side galleries and a large vestry were also added.

My father, after the opening of this chapel, regularly attended the public services held there, and acted as treasurer,—keeping the accounts with the greatest exactness. He was also chosen a deacon of the church, in conjunction with the late Mr. James Kemp, between whom and himself there subsisted during the whole time of their connexion entire cordiality.†

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* Memoir of Rev. Geo. Burder, p. 235. It may be mentioned that the plan for this union was drawn up by a committee of the London Congregational Board. The Hampshire Association, in which Dr. Bogue was then a leading minister, promptly joined it, and Dr. Edward Williams warmly supported it. See memoir of him by Mr. Gilbert, pp. 445—454. The writer will always consider it a high honour to have been one of the few individuals who, in May, 1830, took the initiatory steps which led to the formation, in May of the next year, of the Congregational Union of England and Wales—for which he may be permitted devoutly to breathe the fervent wish and prayer of Father Paul for the republic of Venice—Esto perpetua! May it not only continue, but by the blessing of Heaven prosperously effect its good designs!

† This excellent man was a native of Scotland. My father, in recording his death, which took place January 29, 1819, says: "He had acted with me in the office of deacon nearly twenty years with perfect harmony, was a truly pious man, of good understanding, great integrity

The church was rapidly increased by the accession of new members—most of them new converts, and my father was cheered from time to time by seeing many added to the once little flock, of persons who were saved. Although much of the labour devolved upon him, he had a valuable coadjutor in Mr. Kemp, who acted rather in the capacity of a lay elder—visiting the sick, and conversing with candidates for church communion. My father undertook the providing of ministers to supply the pulpit, and obtained the valuable services of some of the most impressive, energetic, and evangelical preachers of that day. It was a great advantage to the students in the academy, that they thus enjoyed the opportunity of hearing popular and effective preachers on the spot. London ministers, or those who came to the metropolis from the country and from America, were also occasionally invited to preach on the Thursday evening.

My father attended all the week services. His rule was, to be always at his post; and nothing but illness or absence from town hindered his presence. In his letters are frequent references to the increase of the

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and activity, perfectly unassuming, ready to visit the sick, and punctual in his attendance on the duties of his office. He had kept a Sunday-school in his house for nearly thirty years with the assistance of his family. This he continued till the year 1814, when school-rooms were erected near the chapel. He preached occasionally in the country, and addressed the children of the Sunday-school frequently. The students of Hoxton Academy preached in his house on Tuesday evenings." A sermon, upon the occasion of his death, by the late Dr. William Harris, and an address at his interment, by the Rev. George Collison, were published.

church, which he evidently regarded with lively interest. March 1, 1805, he writes: "There appears to be a great work going on at Hoxton. The chapel is well filled, and the prayer-meeting well attended." Sept. 12. "The Lord is carrying on his work at Hoxton. Many are testifying what God has done for their souls." May 21, 1808. "We go on well at the chapel; five members were admitted last month, and five more stand proposed." January 5, 1809. "We expect to admit nine new members, and to propose six."

The following passage from Dr. Philip's notes will show the earnest desire manifested by my father to help forward the work of the Lord in this place:

> "I have seldom seen him more in his element than when in the house of God, listening to an impressive and faithful sermon; looking round him with an inquisitive eye on the congregation, to observe its effect; or endeavouring to find seats for strangers—particularly for that class of them who sometimes appear at the doors or in the aisles of our places of worship, as if they had dropped in by accident without knowing wherefore. The grandeur of an object imparts a portion of its own dignity to the humblest affairs relating to it; and the elevation and pleasure I have seen beaming in his countenance when he felt that he had brought one sinner under the sound of the Gospel, was second only to that which he felt when a lost sheep had been restored to the fold of Christ. It was in witnessing him engaged in a scene of this character that I first understood the words of the Psalmist, 'I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of God, than dwell in the tents of wickedness.'

"The following incident will suffice to illustrate the interest he took in doing good in this way, and the truly Christian principle on which he acted, and which kept him constantly alive to the salvation of his perishing fellow-creatures. The case to which I allude occurred many years ago in Hoxton chapel. Just as the preacher was about to begin his discourse, I observed your father leave the chapel by the entrance through the vestry, and, going round to the front door, bring up some persons who were standing there. Having introduced them to sittings, he resumed his own seat with a satisfaction in his countenance which indicated that his mind had been disturbed, and that it was now at rest. I was struck with the thing itself, and particularly with the manner in which it was done. In reply to a question I put to him after the service, he remarked with much life and energy, that from the appearance of the persons, he saw that they were not likely to remain as they were, and that the thought then came into his mind—perhaps they may never have the opportunity of hearing another sermon, and if I can by any means detain them till the present service shall be over, who knows but that I may meet some of them in heaven, and that they may date their conversion to God from what they may hear this evening?"

His close connexion with this place gave occasion to a fresh development of that abhorrence of war for which, in earlier life, he had been distinguished. The war with Napoleon, which was proclaimed April 29, 1803, although generally popular, was denounced by him as utterly at variance with the spirit of Christianity. Toward the end of 1805 there was a day of national thanksgiving for that dreadful scene of wholesale massacre called "the glorious victory" of Trafalgar. So general was the desire manifested to help forward this war, that the people—not content with being heavily taxed to support its enormous expense—had imposed a voluntary tax upon themselves, by establishing what was called 'the Patriotic Fund'—a fund to which my father, forward as he was to every good work, was not a contributor.

Some active gentlemen at Lloyd's Coffee-house sent circular letters to ministers and other leading persons connected with different religious denominations, requesting collections on this occasion for the Patriotic Fund, and the request was very generally complied with.* My father entertained strong conscientious doubts as to the propriety of appealing to a congregation, assembled for religious worship, toward what appeared to him to involve a sanction of this conflict. He held that all wars—except such as are strictly defensive—are "contrary to Christianity," and determined that, so far as his influence could extend, no *voluntary* contributions should be obtained for the indirect support of what, according to the strong views held by him, he did not hesitate to designate "a system of murder abroad, and corruption at home."

In 1807 he published a small volume of "Select Hymns," intended as a supplement to Dr. Watts's Psalms and Hymns, the preparation of which had cost him considerable labour. He wrote out the hymns introduced into this selection with his own hand; and in the midst of his multifarious public engagements at this period of his life, the time devoted to that work must have been saved from hours which might lawfully have been devoted to relaxation and repose. He had also much trouble and difficulty arising out of some negociation with the late Dr. Rippon, to whom he applied for leave to introduce some of the original hymns contained in his larger volume, which that gentleman refused to grant.

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* Above £100,000, collected on this day, was appropriated to the relief of wounded soldiers, and the widows of those who had fallen in battle.

The character of the three hundred and eighty-three hymns contained in this little volume may be described in the two words used in the preface, "evangelical and experimental." It was originally intended, as the title-page states, for the use of the congregation assembling in the chapel adjoining Hoxton Academy, but was afterward introduced into other chapels in London, and has been also adopted by some congregations in the country. My father says, "I have reason to believe the selection has proved a blessing to many; and that it will be useful in future years, I have no doubt, as it contains many hymns full of Christ, and the glorious Gospel of his grace."

The greater part of the original hymns which have been published since Dr. Watts's admirable volume first appeared in the year 1707, have been—like many of the Doctor's, of a class more adapted to the devotions of the closet, or of the family, and to meetings for social worship, than to the public services of the church and the congregation. Even now, notwithstanding the great number of volumes of hymns that have been published, there appears to be need of metrical compositions of a superior order of poetical merit, expressly adapted to public worship, and consisting chiefly of adoration, praise, and worship—properly so called.

The closing sentence of the short preface to this little volume shows that my father disapproved of the posture then generally adopted by the English Dissenters, and the Scotch Presbyterians, of *sitting* at the time of singing. To place the body in a position of ease and comparative rest certainly does seem inappropriate to any act of *worship*, and hymns containing a direct address to the Deity or expressive of homage and adoration, cannot surely, with propriety, be sung by persons in a sitting posture; but many, perhaps most, of the hymns contained in this selection, and I may add in most others, are not of the character just described. The only objection to standing to sing in the public worship of God, as conducted by Dissenters, is, that it too commonly leads to sitting in the time of prayer, and the pews in our chapels are not generally so constructed as to admit of kneeling.

CHAPTER XV.

STUDENTS OF HOXTON ACADEMY SENT TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW —MY FATHER'S CONCERN IN THIS MEASURE—FARTHER PARTICULARS CONCERNING HOXTON ACADEMY AND HIS EFFORTS TO PROMOTE ITS WELFARE.

In the spring of 1804 the attention of the committee of Hoxton Academy was directed to the propriety of sending some of the students to Scotland, for the purpose of going through a university course of classical and philosophical studies.

April 13. The treasurer reported the substance of a communication which he had held with Dr. Abraham Rees, relative to a bequest of the late Dr. Daniel Williams for the support of theological students at the University of Glasgow; and that Dr. Williams's trustees, to whom the subject had been mentioned by Dr. Rees, had manifested a readiness to grant the benefits of that fund to two of the Hoxton students.

June 8. The offer of Dr. Williams's trustees to admit two students on this foundation was accepted—subject to the approbation of the approaching general meeting. The tutors and treasurer were also appointed a sub-committee to correspond with suitable persons in Glasgow, and to prepare instructions for the conduct of the students whilst at the university. The tutors recommended Mr. George Payne and Mr. Joseph Fletcher as suitable persons to be sent to Glasgow.

The general meeting held on the 26th adopted this recommendation, and referred it to the committee to prepare suitable regulations.

My father's letter to the late Rev. Greville Ewing has been preserved, and although it has already been printed in the memoir of that excellent man,* I cannot refrain from inserting it nearly entire.

"July 21, 1804. Accept my best thanks for the present of a copy of your lecture.† I have always read your publications with much pleasure, and hope you will meet with encouragement to proceed in that way of doing good.

"It was suggested to me by the Rev. Mr. Greatheed, that it would be particularly desirable, if a selection was made of one or two young men, who had made the greatest proficiency at Hoxton Academy, in order to complete their education in one of the Scotch universities; that, by receiving such advantages, they might be more fitted to defend the truth against the attacks of learned infidels and sceptics, and to become able tutors, as well as writers.‡ By inquiry, we learnt that the late Dr. Williams had left a fund to maintain several English students at Glasgow. This led us to apply to the present trustees, who (though in general of opposite sentiments) were willing to grant exhibitions to two of our students to enter the University of Glasgow, at the commencement of the next session. We have fixed upon two of great piety, much sweetness of temper, and possessing taste and abilities for making progress in the various branches of literature.

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* I beg to recommend this very interesting and instructive memoir of a truly apostolical minister, written by his daughter, the widow of the late Rev. Dr. Matheson. 1843.

† On Acts xv. See Memoir, pp. 293, 294.

‡ I need not remind the reader that the late Dr. Fletcher, of Stepney, and Dr. Payne, now of Plymouth, as well as Dr. Burder, of Hackney, proved both able tutors and writers.

"We wish to prepare their way, by recommending them to your favourable regard and attention; particularly as they will necessarily be exposed to new trials and temptations, at a great distance from us. Indeed, our society would have been unwilling they should have gone at all, but from the hope that you would, as a father, watch over their spiritual as well as temporal concerns. I am sure, dear sir, you will agree with me, that unless the life and power of religion in the soul are maintained, as well as a fixed determination to preach *the truth*, with the utmost *simplicity, affection, and fidelity,* we shall only be the instrument of putting tools into their hands which may do mischief to that cause we desire with the greatest anxiety to serve.

"We understand they must board in a private family; how important then is it that it should be a pious one! where they will have opportunity to engage in family worship, and in religious conversation; and live in a plain yet comfortable way, with every facility for uninterrupted study, and in such society as would be suitable. Perhaps you will be able to learn, before the time it will be needful they should go, of some respectable family, who will be willing to take them in; and I shall be obliged to you to inform me of the particulars.

"While they diligently pursue their studies it appears to me peculiarly desirable they should have opportunity for attending prayer-meetings, preaching in rooms, &c., among *the poor,* either in the town or adjacent villages, and catechising; the latter may be the most important, as it will give an opportunity of talking, and explaining in a familiar manner, and with close application to the heart and conscience; and this will habituate them to the work in England, where it is shamefully neglected.

"Doing good to the poor and to the most ignorant will, I conceive, have a happy tendency to counteract the evils naturally arising from progressive attainments in science and literature.

"I should mention that a son of Rev. G. Burder, who has been studying the last year at Hoxton, will accompany them; perhaps it will be desirable they should be either in the same house, or near together; but of course his father will be consulted, and direct the future steps of the son.

"I sincerely wish you increasing success in your great work, and that your life may be spared for many years to come. If I should live, perhaps I may visit our young friends in Scotland, but I find great difficulty to leave home. The concerns of the chapel at Hoxton (which is lately considerably enlarged) and the academy press heavily upon me."

My father, while he yielded to the suggestion of Mr. Greatheed, and no doubt felt the force of the reasons upon which it was founded, yet was not, as indeed this letter shows, without serious apprehensions as to an unfavourable result being produced on the young men. Writing, a few years later, to another student who had gone to prosecute his literary studies in Scotland, he says, "I confess I have my fears that going to Glasgow does not make our young men more spiritual or better preachers;" and in another letter, "I trust you will watch and pray against the peculiar temptations which assault [persons of] learned acquisitions." So jealous was he lest the higher qualities of the ministerial character should be impaired or deteriorated by more advanced scholarship.

Precautions, however, were taken to obviate so lamentable an effect. No measure could be more adapted for this purpose than placing the young men under the friendly eye and paternal care of such a man as the late Greville Ewing. Messrs. Fletcher and Payne were still considered Hoxton students; and a correspondence by letter was kept up between them and the committee. The following are extracts from the minutes:

"Dec. 14, 1804. A letter from Mr. Fletcher, and another from Mr. Payne, the two students who have lately gone to Glasgow, were read. They were very encouraging and satisfactory."

"January 11, 1805. (General Meeting.) Letters from Mr. Fletcher and Mr. Payne, the society's two students at the university of Glasgow, were read—giving very satisfactory accounts of their diligence in the prosecution of their studies, and of their efforts in instructing the children of a sabbath-school, and also introducing family worship, and lending religious books in the family in which they board.

"A letter from Mr. Henry Forster Burder, who accompanied those two students, was also read, equally satisfactory."

"January 17, 1806. A letter was read from Mr. George Payne, one of the society's students at Glasgow; also a letter from the Rev. Greville Ewing, giving a very satisfactory account of the character and abilities of the three students there."

At the same meeting the treasurer reported that the annual subscriptions which, in 1797, amounted to £509, had during the preceding year (1805) increased to £1314.*

Toward the end of the year 1807 my father removed his residence to No. 4, Tyndale place, Islington, but he engaged the use of two rooms very near the house which he quitted in Artillery place. At these rooms he regularly attended every morning of the six working days for four or five hours—so that students at the college, or ministers from the country, might have convenient access to him during some part of the day.

The late Rev. John Atkinson, who had been appointed assistant tutor in Hoxton Academy, on Mr. Collison's retirement in 1801, resigned that office

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* I may here mention that the minutes of meetings held from April 10, 1801, to December 11, 1807 are neatly and accurately written in my father's hand. He probably undertook this office until a secretary was appointed. The late Rev. Charles Buck was invited to accept that office on the day last mentioned. I shall be pardoned for copying the following minute, concerning an illustrious man, whom my father often mentioned as one of the brightest luminaries that arose out of Hoxton Academy.

"June 8, 1804. A letter was read from Robert Morrison, a student, stating that after deliberation and prayer, he had offered his services to the [London] Missionary Society, and having been accepted by the Directors, he begged leave to return his grateful acknowledgments. A letter was also read from the Rev. Mr. Burder, secretary to that Society, stating their approval of Mr. Morrison, and that the Society felt obliged to this institution for the advantages which he had received in it."

August 5, 1807.* The Rev. Joseph Fletcher, M.A., then of Blackburn (afterward Dr. F.) was invited to succeed him, but declined. Some time after, the late Rev. John Hooper, M.A., of Glasgow University, was chosen classical tutor.

In October, 1808, the tutors having reported that "the present accommodation for the students in the house was unfavourable to their health," a committee of three persons—the treasurer being one—was appointed to examine what improvements could be made. In consequence of the report of this sub-committee, it was resolved at the general meeting held January 13, 1809, that all the studies in the house should be removed, and a range of buildings, two stories high, each containing twenty-four studies, erected in a convenient part of the adjoining ground. A subscription was immediately commenced by a gentleman present offering a hundred guineas. My father promptly offered the same, on condition that three or four others would join. His two brothers-in-law, Mr. Samuel Mills, and Mr. Joseph Wilson; Mr. Thomas Pellatt and Mr. Samuel Robinson, accepted the challenge.

At the same meeting, the treasurer read extracts from several letters of a pleasing nature, relative to the usefulness of the students, and a resolution of thanks for his *unwearied* services was passed—a resolution repeated in the same appropriate terms at subsequent meetings.

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* The following is a copy from the minutes of that day: "Resolved, that the Committee accept Mr. Atkinson's resignation with regret, and that they feel themselves and the academy to be much indebted to him for his past services."

The lowest of seven tenders for the erection of thirty studies (£1690. 13*s.*) was accepted.*

Another subject of general interest shortly afterward arose. A sub-committee was appointed, by whom inquiries were made in reference to the mode of education adopted in other academies, with a view to the improvement of the system pursued at Hoxton.

July 3, 1809. It was agreed that the outline of an enlarged plan of study should be immediately drawn up, to be presented to the next general meeting. The sub-committee also recommended the appointment of a third tutor, to carry the new plan into full execution. The gentleman recommended as suitable to fill this office was Rev. Henry Forster Burder, M.A.—very satisfactory testimonials having been produced from various professors at Glasgow. This was confirmed by the choice of the general meeting in January following. The annexed is an outline of the new plan of education:

"Rev. Mr. Simpson: Hebrew connected with Biblical criticism—Jewish Antiquities—Evidences of Divine Revelation—Systematic Divinity—Ecclesiastical History, and the connexion of sacred with profane history.

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* They were six feet by eight, with brick partitions and a small fireplace in each. In July, 1819, a third story was added, thus increasing the number of studies to forty, to provide accommodation for the increased number of students.

"Rev. Mr. Hooper: English Grammar—Geography—Latin, and prose composition in that language—Greek.

"Rev. Mr. Burder: Pneumatology—Logic—Belles Lettres, with a special regard to pulpit composition and elocution."*

This may be considered as the last considerable improvement introduced into the method of education pursued at Hoxton—and as, in fact, the establishment of the institution on a fixed and permanent basis.

At the general meeting, January 12, 1810, the treasurer read a statement of the expenses incurred by building the new studies, and sundry alterations in the house, amounting to £2301. 8*s.* 3*d.*—towards which he had received £1696. 3*s.* 9*d.*, leaving a balance due to him of £605. 4*s.* 6*d.*, also a statement of the annual accounts, from which it appeared that a balance of £474. 15*s.* was due to him—making together a total of £1079. 19*s.* 6*d.*

My father's exertions on behalf of the college continued unremitting, although circumstances had occasionally arisen to put his faith and patience to a severe test. His efforts were directed to the obtaining not only of annual subscriptions, but also of occasional collections made after public service on the Lord's-day. This proved a fruitful source of increase to the annual income. A tribute to his exertions in this respect, was incidently borne in a printed paper issued by the Bristol [Baptist] Education Society, Nov. 8, 1811, from which the following is an extract:

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* To this gentleman [Rev. Dr. Burder, of Hackney] the institution is deeply indebted for the great improvements introduced by him into the general course of study pursued at Hoxton while he filled, for many years, the office of tutor.

"To the praise of many of the churches of our brethren of the Independent denomination of Dissenters, the Hoxton Academy has for many years received considerable support from the collections which they have made after public service. In some years these collections have been greater, and in others less; but in the year 1809, it appears by the printed account of that academy, that they exceeded the sum of £450."

As his very unworthy successor in the office of treasurer, I may be permitted to express my earnest hope that the strong opinion and decided recommendation of the delegates from the committees of various theological colleges who attended the conference held in London in January, 1845—"that a public collection be *annually* made in all our congregations for some one of our colleges"—may be generally, at least, adopted in practice.* Independently of the pecuniary benefit which would result to those important institutions, great indirect good might be done by bringing periodically, and at no *distant* intervals, the claims of our collegiate establishments before our churches. The comparatively trifling interest at present felt in them, is partly owing to the limited information possessed, and the very infrequent opportunities at present afforded of directing attention to them, and enforcing their claims on the sympathy and support of our people. There are, indeed, many claims of a similar kind, but whatever institutions may be pretermitted or postponed—the schools of our prophets, the training-places of our future ministers, surely should not be neglected. There would, also, be a healthy re-action from the pastors and churches upon the colleges, if this mode were adopted to increase the feeling of interest which is on every account most desirable, and also to secure the fervent intercessions of the members of our churches in their behalf.*

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* The following is a copy of that resolution: "They cannot close their deliberations without declaring their opinion strongly in favour of an annual collection in every church for the support of that college with which each may be most immediately connected—a custom rendered necessary by the increasing financial wants of the colleges, and which would open to all our pastors so excellent an opportunity, once in every year, to imbue their people with convictions in favour of an educated as well as godly ministry; and to engage their earnest frequent prayers on behalf of the young brethren training for the sacred work."

Our colleges are, it appears to me, above all others, the institutions which our churches should adopt as their own, and seek by all means to improve and render more efficient. Are they not at present, I may ask, left too much to the sole care and concern of the few individuals who constitute their respective committees? I need not advert to the peculiar claims which these almæ matres have upon those whom they have nourished and brought up as children.

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* The author has felt warranted in speaking thus confidently and strongly, being supported by the resolution above referred to; but he deems it proper to state that in these remarks he wishes to be understood as expressing only his individual opinion.

Having now traced the origin and earlier progress of the important institution at Hoxton, it is not my intention to pursue its history into farther detail. Its humble birth and modest pretensions, but speedy rise and increase under the fostering care of my grandfather and his coadjutors, and also its more rapid development and mature growth under the watchful eye and active patronage of its second treasurer—if they do not specially belong—are at least appropriate to this work. Its later history is too well known to require minute and particular statement. That, however, may be given to the public at some future time.

CHAPTER XVI.

CHAPELS PURCHASED OR ERECTED BY MY FATHER AT HOLLOWAY AND KENTISH TOWN—HIS EFFORTS, IN CONJUNCTION WITH OTHER INDIVIDUALS, TO PROCURE THE ERECTION OF CHAPELS IN THE VICINITY OF LONDON—TONBRIDGE CHAPEL.

My father, after having built a chapel in one of the environs of London, had been led to recover some in neighbouring or more distant counties, which had been alienated, or fallen into decay—but he still retained a compassionate feeling for the great metropolis. He was a native, and had been all his life an inhabitant of London, and he well knew how much its growing population needed additional buildings for the preaching of the Gospel.

At Holloway, in the upper part of the parish of Islington, a population was rising up without any place of worship. A person named Williams, who had built several houses at that place, erected a small chapel, of which he granted a lease (dated Aug. 24, 1804) to my father and four other gentlemen, at a yearly rent of £70. This chapel was opened Sept. 9, when two sermons were preached by Mr. James Haldane, of Edinburgh.

Mr. Williams being desirous of selling the chapel, applied to my father to become the purchaser. He stated that he had no wish to buy it, but would give as much as £1000. Mr. W. declined this offer, and sometime afterward put up the chapel to auction at Garraway's coffee-house; but no person bidding, he came to my father, and agreed to accept his offer. The purchase was accordingly completed, and the purchaser allowed the use of it to the congregation without receiving any rent for a year or more; but the precaution of insuring the chapel was unhappily neglected. Very early on the morning of September 26, 1807, the chapel was burnt to the ground. While it was being rapidly consumed, the minister, Rev. Ingram Cobbin, who had settled there the year before, hastened to apprise my father, who being informed of the catastrophe through the window, quickly descended to admit Mr. C., who, in relating the circumstance, says: "The question instantly asked of him was, 'Is it insured?' His reply was, '*No; but how shall we manage to rebuild it?*' The way in which he proposed the question showed the deepest concern, while he seemed altogether forgetful of his own loss."

My father had strong suspicions that the chapel was wilfully set on fire, and he mentions some circumstances which appeared to warrant that suspicion. A reward of £200 was offered, but no incendiary was discovered. After selling a portion of the land for £200, he gave the remaining ground and the materials to the people, and a new, but rather smaller chapel was built, which was opened Sept. 27, 1808, and vested in trustees. This chapel has since been more than once enlarged, and a new and more capacious chapel has been lately erected at a short distance from the old building, by the congregation now under the ministry of Rev. A. J. Morris. This beautiful Gothic building was opened for divine service on the 23rd of last April.*

My father, in the year 1805, was in the habit of riding on horseback into the country—particularly on the north side of London, and frequently passed through Kentish Town. He saw new houses rapidly rising up; but no provision being made for the spiritual welfare of their inhabitants, he was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep having no shepherd.

Observing a notice of ground to be let, he made inquiry, and found that it belonged to the governors of St. Bartholomew's Hospital. He made an offer, which the committee declined to accept. The next day he called on the treasurer, Mr. Baldwin, to ask if there was any objection to a Dissenting chapel being built on their ground. Mr. B. did not openly state that there was, and promised that if anything decisive occurred, he should be informed. About six months afterward, my father observed a piece of ground near the former spot to be let. Accompanied by a builder, he went to Mr. Clare—the person of whom inquiries were to be made, and stated what was the object he had in view. Mr. Clare said, 'I have an agreement for land belonging to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, upon which three third-rate tenements are to be built, and I am willing to let you build a chapel;' adding that, 'as such an erection would be a *first*-rate building, no objection could be made by the committee of the hospital.' Another circumstance appeared to my father's mind, as confirming this view, and he imprudently (it must be admitted) entered into an agreement with Mr. Clare. In a few months the erection of a small chapel was begun. No objection on the part of the hospital was heard of till the roof was laid, and the slates were being placed upon it, when he learned that the collector had refused to receive Mr. Clare's rent, on account of his having suffered a chapel to be erected upon the ground. My father then applied to Mr. Baldwin, and subsequently made two different proposals (the latter, an additional ground-rent of twenty pounds a-year) to the committee, who, refusing all terms of accommodation, and acting in a spirit of determined opposition—threatened to eject Mr. Clare if the building was not removed, and thus left no alternative but the pulling down of the chapel. Notwithstanding this formidable difficulty, he persevered, and Divine Providence interposed to encourage him in the prosecution of his noble design—for just at the critical moment he found that land immediately adjoining, which belonged to Lord Dartmouth, might be obtained—his lordship's steward being favourable. The chapel was taken down, and the materials removed for safety to an empty barn which happened to be close at hand on this ground. After some months' delay—arising out of a difficulty with respect to the title, a satisfactory arrangement was made for a grant, equivalent to a lease of the land for a long term, and the new chapel proceeded. It was opened June 26, 1807.

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* My father, who had fostered this little flock from the time of its being first gathered in 1802, was always ready to afford it assistance. For some time previous to the settlement of the late Rev. Richard Bowden, in the year 1814, he regularly attended and delivered a short address at the weekly prayer meetings. Two persons, who afterward became members of the church, derived spiritual benefit from these addresses.

The whole expense of building, taking down, and rebuilding (exclusive of the vestry) was £2031. 13*s.* My father undertook to collect by personal calls in London and the neighbourhood part of this amount, and found so much favour with those to whom he applied, that he obtained upwards of £600. He gave £50, £200 was raised by friends in Kentish Town, and the remaining balance was, I believe, gradually paid off. He says, "I consider it matter of thankfulness that the object was not lost—notwithstanding the opposition." The dimensions of this chapel are fifty-two by thirty-two feet. The Rev. John Hasloch, in 1810, accepted an invitation to become pastor of the church formed in this place, and the next year galleries were erected. In 1834 an infant school-room was built at the back of the chapel.

The success with which God had been pleased to crown his effort to raise a congregation at Hoxton, encouraged my father in the year 1808 to take measures for the erection of more large chapels in the immediate suburbs of the metropolis. He mentioned his views and feelings to several gentlemen, in the hope of inducing others to unite with him in a general movement for spreading the Gospel by the erection of respectable chapels in public situations. Two individuals, the late Joseph Bunnell, Esq., of Tyndale place, Islington, and the late Robert Steven, Esq., of Thames street, responded to his appeal, and accompanied him in "looking out for the most proper situations."

Their attention was first directed to the populous parish of Marylebone, where a large new town had sprung up, with very inadequate spiritual provision for the inhabitants. A piece of ground which appeared a suitable site was fixed upon, and an offer made—either to purchase, or take a lease of it.* After some months' suspense this offer was refused; but a spot which was deemed highly eligible (Tonbridge place) in the New road, near Judd street, was obtained on a building lease from the court of the Skinners' Company early in the year 1809. The plan proposed for raising the needful funds was to obtain loans of not less than £50, from various individuals. This plan was partially carried into effect, but the chief burden fell upon two individuals.

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* I have reason to believe that the ground fixed upon was at the end of Durweston street. In a letter dated January 5, 1809, my father says, "We have offered to take a large piece of ground for a chapel in the New road, opposite Somers town,—whether we shall succeed, both in this and the ground in Marylebone, is yet undecided."

My father advanced £1500, Mr. Bunnell the same amount, the late Alexander Riddell, Esq., £200, another gentleman £150, fifteen others £100 each, and other sums were *given.** A chapel (fifty feet by seventy) was soon after begun. The total expense of the erection, fittings, &c. was £5700. This building—called Tonbridge chapel, was opened for Divine worship November 7, 1810, when the late Rev. John Clayton preached in the morning from Matt. xviii. 20, and the late Rev. Dr. Winter in the evening from Isaiah liv. 2, 3. The following extract from a printed address, without date, in reference to this chapel will show the views and sentiments of its founders:

"While the inhabitants of this great metropolis are so laudably engaged in providing the means of grace for various parts of the *country,* it has been judged by many persons, that several populous districts of the *metropolis* and its growing vicinity, have not yet excited a sufficient degree of attention. Squares, streets, rows, and places, almost without number, are continually rising, and extending themselves around us in every direction; but there has not been that attention paid to the erection of new chapels which is necessary.

"In the *west end of the town* particularly, the number of places for Divine worship where the distinguishing doctrines of the Gospel are preached, is lamentably small; so that there seems to be a loud call for united and vigorous exertions in order to increase them; especially as there is every reason to believe that many thousands more would gladly hear the Gospel in London and its vicinity, were suitable places provided."

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* The smaller sums lent were afterward paid off in full, and a gradual reduction was made in the larger amounts advanced by my father and Mr. Bunnell, till they were each reduced to £350. My father gave up the remaining balance, and I believe Mr. Bunnell's executors also

On the afternoon of the first Lord's-day after the opening of this chapel, the truth contained in a sermon preached by Rev. John (now Dr.) Leifchild, was effectually conveyed by Divine power to the heart of a young man named Smith, who afterward rose to high eminence and distinction in the Christian church, and whose name acquired, in the year 1824, great celebrity in England as the martyr missionary of Demerara. He was one of several students for the ministry who were educated in part under my father's patronage, although not admitted into Hoxton academy.

A large church has been gathered in this chapel, and the Gospel preached there has been made the power of God to the salvation of many under the ministry of the late Rev. Benjamin Rayson, (who resigned, on account of impaired health, in 1832,) and of his successor the Rev. John Woodwark, the present minister.

My father was for many years a member of the committee of Deputies,* and also of the Protestant Society for the Protection of Religious Liberty. I have reason to believe that he took an active part in the measures adopted in the metropolis, in the spring of 1811, which originated a general resistance to an insidious attempt made by the late Lord Sidmouth to infringe the liberty of preaching granted by the Toleration Act. The whole body of Dissenters was effectually roused to put forth its power in opposition to this crafty design, and the result shows what can be accomplished by a great community when united and determined. The Bill was brought into the House of Lords, May 9, and the second reading was postponed from the 17th till the 21st, by which day the strong tide of public feeling had swelled to an inundation; and so great a flood, so sweeping a torrent of petitions was poured into the House, as threatened to overwhelm not only the Bill, but their lordships also; so that the author of the measure was compelled to abandon his ill-omened progeny to its deserved fate.

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* Appointed by the congregations of Protestant Dissenters in and within ten miles of London, for the protection of their civil rights.

In the autumn of this year (1811) the brief but brilliant career of that very extraordinary young preacher Thomas Spencer was suddenly and abruptly terminated.

This lovely, modest, and pious youth, during a short residence in London, in 1805, had been introduced to the notice of my father, who, struck with his interesting appearance and engaging manners, encouraged him to look forward with hope to the Christian ministry, and placed him, at his own expense, under the fostering care and preparatory instruction of an excellent minister already mentioned—Rev. William Hordle, of Harwich, who recommended him for admission into the institution which had previously received not a few whom the same kind patron had encouraged or enabled to enter. My father says: "I am thankful to have been the first instrument in bringing him forward, sending him to Harwich, and introducing him to Hoxton Academy, at sixteen years of age."

It was chiefly, I believe, through my father's advice and influence that Spencer accepted the call to a vacant Congregational church in Liverpool; having been sent by the committee, contrary to his own wishes and inclinations, to supply the chapel in Newington during the vacation of 1810.

In a letter dated Liverpool, July 31, 1810, of which a copy, in my father's handwriting, is now before me, addressed to a minister who had recommended Plymouth Dock as a suitable sphere of ministerial labour for him, he says, "You wish me to visit that place next vacation, but I shall then have left the academy, as my term will expire at Christmas. Besides, other places have claims upon me. Liverpool itself far exceeds my expectations, and presents a vast sphere of usefulness to an active and zealous labourer for God."

My father well knew how much Liverpool at that time needed an earnest, lively, energetic preacher of the Gospel, having frequently visited that place, near which his brother-in-law, Mr. Thomas Bateman, resided for many years.* He judged, and notwithstanding the lamentable event, judged rightly, that such a man, and such a preacher, would be a great blessing to that large and important town.

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* Formerly of Manchester, now of Middleton hall, near Bakewell, who has built and endowed a small neat chapel on his estate at Middleton

Mr. Spencer had preached many times at Hoxton chapel in 1808 and 1809, and attracted great congregations there and in other London chapels. He preached his farewell sermon at Hoxton on the 28th January, 1811, and afterward engaged to supply that place on the two first Lord's-days in September—but alas! his short ministerial course had previously reached its close. His ordination took place on the 27th June, but his pastoral relation to a fondly-attached and rapidly-increasing flock lasted only till the 5th of the following August, when, by the inscrutable decree of the supreme but all-wise Disposer, he was hastily snatched away.* His ministry in Liverpool proved in the highest degree attractive, and drew crowds of admiring auditors belonging to all orders and classes in that high-church town—clergymen even not excepted. Although to many he was but "as one that had a pleasant voice, and could play well on an instrument;" yet to others, and those not a few, his word came in demonstration of the Spirit, and with power. The sensation produced as the tidings of his death spread rapidly through the whole town, could scarcely have been more powerful had some great public calamity befallen its inhabitants, and the deeply affecting scene presented by his funeral still remains fresh in the recollection of the writer, who had the melancholy privilege of witnessing that truly mournful spectacle.

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* In a letter to my father dated Aug. 2, 1811, only three days before his death, Spencer says, "My time is fully occupied in attending to the affairs of the church and congregation under my charge. I hope you found benefit from your excursion this year into Lancashire. May you be enabled to pursue with fresh ardour the work of promoting the honour of Christ!"

The intelligence of his death, abruptly communicated by one of the Hoxton students, was a great shock to my father, and might have proved seriously detrimental, had not my mother, who was then in Liverpool, prepared his mind in some degree for the mournful announcement by mentioning, in a letter written on the day of the fatal event, a report as then prevalent in the town that Spencer had been drowned. My father had fondly looked forward to a protracted term of life and an extended course of usefulness for this much-loved young minister: but the decree had gone forth that he should be cut off in the morning of his days; and should give place to a successor who, for more than thirty years, has been a great blessing, not to that town only, but also to the whole county of Lancaster, and in whose efficient public ministrations the whole of England has largely shared.—I need scarcely mention the name of the Rev. Dr. Raffles.

In the year 1811 my father wrote a letter to an excellent minister still living, although laid aside from public work—the Rev. Thomas Taylor, of Bradford, Yorkshire, who had for some years previously come up to supply the pulpit of Hoxton chapel—which showed his desire to promote the spread of the Gospel in the largest and one of the most populous English counties, and led to important results. The letter itself has not been preserved, but the following communication, addressed to my father, from Rev. John Cockin, of Holmfirth, dated February 9, 1814, will explain the particular circumstances:

"Dear Sir,—I take the liberty to send you the first and second reports of our Itinerant Society, because I think you will like to see what we are doing, and because you have a more intimate relation to this business than perhaps you are aware of. It may occur to your recollection, that about three years ago, you addressed a letter to the Rev. Mr. Taylor, of Bradford, on the duty of ministers in Yorkshire to make some exertions for the spread of the Gospel in the dark parts of the county. That letter was read at our next Heckmondwike lecture. Many observations were made, but nothing was carried into effect. Afterwards, a meeting of ministers and gentlemen was expressly assembled for the business; a plan was arranged, and operations were begun. Our success has exceeded our expectations. A minister of the Lancashire Union observed to me, that our society was the last in its commencement, and has been the quickest in its progress. We render thanks to God for his efficacious blessing upon our labours, and we express our acknowledgments to you for having given the first impulse to our motions."

My father laboured amidst many discouragements. He sought not the praise of men, but the honour which cometh from God only; yet he was not insensible to "praise, genuine and unadulterated by flattery." *Laudari a viro laudato* is an honour which no wise man will despise. He might also derive stimulus and encouragement to renewed activity and effort from the commendation of a man who was himself "in labours more abundant" than almost any one of his ministerial brethren. Among my father's correspondents at this time was the late Rev. Dr. Bogue, of Gosport, three of whose letters to him have been preserved, from which the following are copious extracts:*

"My dear Sir,—I took the enclosed without thinking; but when I reflected that you had a minister officiating at Hoxton chapel, I felt the impropriety of what I had done, and beg leave to return it with many thanks.

"I very highly esteem you as an eminently zealous and useful servant of Jesus Christ. Were there fifty such men in England among the Independents, the kingdom of Christ would rapidly increase among us.

"That the Lord may bless you with health and length of days, intimate communion with Himself, and continued activity, and zeal, and usefulness to the end, and that your dear and good partner and your children may enjoy all the blessings of the new covenant, is the earnest prayer of

"My dear Sir, yours very affectionately,

"DAVID BOGUE.

"*London,* 14 *August,* 1812."

"*Gosport,* 31 *March,* 1813.

"My dear Sir,—I will with pleasure assist at Tonbridge chapel during a part of my vacation, and, if you please, will engage for the four first Lord's-days of August.

"It gives me great pleasure to hear of the flourishing state of your academy. May it long continue to be the fruitful nursery for valuable ministers in the church of Christ!

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* All who knew Dr. Bogue, know that he had too manly and robust a mind to be a flatterer. Nor was he on terms of intimacy with my father.

"I rejoice to hear that you are building a place at Marylebone.* I trust that thousands of souls may be converted in it by the ministry of the word. There is certainly at the present time something of the power of God upon the hearts of men, inclining them to attend on the preaching of the Gospel, and listen to religious conversation beyond what was formerly the case. This is exceedingly encouraging to all who are exerting themselves to promote the Redeemer's cause. I hope it is the merciful design of God, to spread a spirit of religion more extensively among the people of England, and I think every minister of Christ should be labouring with all his might, both in public and in private, and rousing his people to assist him. In your extensive correspondence, press this strongly on the minds of young ministers, and exhort them earnestly to pray for a more abundant effusion of the Holy Spirit on their souls, their labours, and their flocks. Urge them to keep this constantly in view, as a matter of infinite importance. Exhort them also to break up fallow ground, and to go where none ever went before.

"As an encouragement to this, I beg leave to mention a pleasing instance of success in my circle. A student came to me from Jersey in 1802; after the conclusion of his studies he returned home. There are now three other ministers in Jersey who are his converts, a fourth who also labours [there], and a fifth at Guernsey, where, within the last two or three years, he has raised a church of 120 members. They have all been students here, and all preach in the French tongue. I have four students from Jersey with me at present. They preach every Lord's-day to the French prisoners in our neighbourhood, and have a very promising attendance. They have also established libraries among them, consisting of Bibles, Testaments, Doddridge's Rise and Progress, my Essay on the

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* See next chapter.

New Testament, and tracts. Many of the poor men read with some degree of interest, and I hope God will give his blessing. All this proceeded from that *one* young man.

"Mr. Thomas Adams, who was formerly a student with me, but is unable from ill health to take the charge of a congregation, was some months at Oxford in the course of last year, and had much conversation among the pious people, especially of the church; and he has no doubt that if an Independent congregation was established there, it would flourish. There was then no lecture on a Sabbath evening in the whole city. Allow me, Sir, to recommend this subject to your consideration. There was once a Pædobaptist congregation there; why should it not be restored?

"Mrs. B. unites in kindest regards to you and Mrs. Wilson, and your young folks. I pray that the Lord may preserve your valuable life for many years; and I remain, with great esteem, my dear Sir, very affectionately yours,

"David Bogue.

"P.S. If the student who has a missionary spirit should prove a second Morrison, he will be an honour to your institution, and a blessing to mankind."

"*Gosport, April* 12, 1815.

"My dear Sir,—I am favoured with your letter, and will endeavour, God willing, to supply Tonbridge chapel on the second, third, and fourth Lord's-days of August.

"Mr. —— might do for the place, but I wish they could find a decidedly superior man; for he would be a blessing, not only to that congregation, but to London in general. It is of the highest importance that on every vacancy they should seek to have men of the first talents, energy, and zeal, to fill the places. Great things might be done by such persons in the metropolis. Mr. Bennett's sermon is much calculated to do good, and I hope it will lead to some new exertion.*

"I think with you, that both Fetter lane and New court should be opened on Sabbath evenings. It is by these services that the country congregations acquire a considerable part of their additions. It is now become the fashion with multitudes to attend service in the evening, rather than in the afternoon; and it is certainly a duty to catch them then. London congregations would in this way find a pleasing increase. * * * *

"Through Divine mercy we never had such a spirit of hearing throughout Hampshire as at the present time. The country people discover great readiness to hear the word, and I am happy to say that the exertions, both of the ministers and congregations, are gradually increasing.

"I have just received a letter from a friend in Edinburgh, who informs me, that in the course of the last year more persons in the middling and higher classes of society have been brought to the knowledge of the Saviour, than in any former time.

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* The sermon referred to was one by the Rev. James (now Dr.) Bennett, entitled 'The Claims of London on the Zeal of Christians,' preached at New Broad street meeting-house, in behalf of the London Association for extending the knowledge of the Gospel in the Metropolis, in which the preacher says, "I augur much good from this institution; for it is the very thing we needed. . . . Your exertions will awaken your prayers, and those of others, who have perhaps prayed for Pekin and forgotten London. . . . Let us employ but not exhaust our strength upon villages, so as to leave the metropolis of the world neglected; as though we thought scores in a corner more precious than hundreds of thousands in the capital city." The object of the Association which was formed this year (1813) was to introduce the preaching of the Gospel into those parts of the metropolis and its vicinity where it appeared to be most needed, and to open suitable chapels for that purpose. It was very inadequately supported, and did not continue in existence many years. The only permanent fruit of its labours is, I believe, a chapel obtained and fitted up in Chandler street, near Grosvenor square, (now Robert street) which was opened Sept. 8, 1813, but that alone has already yielded a rich harvest, amply sufficient to compensate all the money and toil expended. During the first twelve years of the ministry of the present pastor (Rev. W. B. Leach), which commenced in 1827, nearly 500 members were admitted into the Congregational church formed there.

"God is going to do greater things certainly than any we have yet seen. We are, therefore, called to labour with all our might as long as life endures.

"That the Lord may long spare you for a blessing to his church * * * is the earnest prayer of, my dear Sir, yours with great esteem and affection,

"DAVID BOGUE.

"P.S. I have got eight-and-twenty young men, and we are labouring very hard. Favour us with your prayers."

My father, although much occupied with the additional labour devolved upon him by the concerns of Tonbridge chapel, which, for several years after its erection, he chiefly managed and superintended—besides his usual work in connexion with Hoxton Academy, did not neglect the claims of destitute places in the country.

In the year 1812 he heard that an old meeting-house at Chalfont in Buckinghamshire, in which an aged minister had preached about forty years, was in danger of being closed—the congregation being reduced to about twelve persons. Being informed that the late Rev. Hugh Worthington, of Salters' hall, was one of the trustees, my father wrote to him, offering to send students from Hoxton to supply the pulpit. Six months afterward, this offer was accepted. Appearances were at first discouraging, but soon attention was awakened—the chapel was filled, and a

Sunday-school was commenced. In 1815 one of the students was ordained and settled as pastor of a church in this place.

In 1813, a person who preached near Rickmansworth, in Hertfordshire, took a lease for a term of years of two cottages in that agricultural town, which he fitted up as a chapel, but died before the bills were paid. By the exertions of a few religious friends in the neighbourhood, a portion of the money due was collected, and the remainder was raised by two Hoxton students. My father afterward agreed to take the lease, and consequently became answerable for the rent, (£20,) which he continued to pay until the term expired, although the attempt to raise a congregation was abandoned several years previously.

CHAPTER XVII.

INCREASE OF HIS PROPERTY—LARGE CHAPELS BUILT BY HIM IN LONDON—PADDINGTON, CLAREMONT, AND CRAVEN CHAPELS.

In the spring of 1813 my father obtained a considerable accession to his property by the death of his uncle, John Remington, Esq., of Upper Clapton, (his mother's only brother,) who for many years carried on a lucrative business as a broad-silk manufacturer in Milk street, Cheapside, and who dying, unmarried, March 26, bequeathed the fortune he had acquired to his two nephews and his niece.

This may be regarded as one of those critical seasons which furnish occasion for putting a man's principles to the test, and showing whether they are *proof* against the solicitations of a worldly and selfish spirit. How admirably appropriate is that admonition of the Psalmist! (lxii. 10,) "If riches *increase*, set not your heart upon them." The time of a *sudden* accession of wealth is a time of peculiar danger, against which a conscientious Christian will feel the need to set a double watch, and which he will regard as giving double emphasis to that solemn reduplicated admonition of the great Teacher, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness."

Happily, in my father's case, habit had come in aid of principle. He had been too much accustomed to do good, and had tasted too deeply of the pleasures o active beneficence, to be in so great danger from this temptation as he might have been at an earlier period of life. Instances have occurred of persons who, when they possessed comparatively little, were liberal and generous, but who, when a large amount has been suddenly added to their previous stock, have shut up their hearts and closed their purse-strings, acting as if *now* they had something worth keeping. To such persons their riches can be only a cleaving mischief, a corroding curse. The awful language of the apostle James (v. 1—3) is too applicable to them, "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you: your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten: your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days." Such men are but treasuring up for themselves wrath against the day of wrath; accumulating, as it were, the materials of their own funereal pyre.

My father was preserved, by the grace of God, from this fearful condemnation. He did not employ the addition thus made to his yearly income in building and planting, laying house to house, and field to field—

increasing his domestic establishment, or purchasing elegant and costly furniture, but in doing more good—and thereby securing a more abundant entrance into the everlasting habitations; or, to adopt an expression of Whitefield to Lady Huntingdon—"increasing his reward;" a reward, however, altogether of grace, and not in the least of debt or merit.

My father still kept his eye steadily fixed on the large and rapidly-increasing population of the western suburb of the great metropolis. I have often heard him mention that the late E. B. Portman, Esq., M.P., refused to grant a piece of ground in the parish of Marylebone for a chapel, although most of the Dissenters in Dorsetshire had voted for him at the preceding general election—a fact of which he did not fail to remind that gentleman. Happily, however, all the land in this large and populous parish did not belong to Mr. Portman, and in 1813 a most eligible piece of ground unexpectedly presented itself to my father's notice, of which he obtained a lease for a long term. He gave orders on his own sole responsibility for the erection of a spacious chapel (68 feet by 54) with school-rooms in the basement. The contract for the building amounted to £4925. In March of the next year he purchased the freehold for £779. The total amount laid out by my father for chapel and freehold, together with various extras, and fitting up two school-rooms, considerably exceeded £7000.* It was opened for public worship on Friday, September 10, 1813 ; in the morning the late Rev. Dr. Waugh offered prayer, and Rev. John Clayton, jun., preached from John iv. 35,—"The fields are white already to harvest;" in the evening Dr. Collyer preached from Numbers x. 29, "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good."

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* My father was encouraged to lay out this large sum—which, however, he did not intend to *give*,—by the success which had attended his

That my father was desirous of receiving assistance, and took means to invite the co-operation of other wealthy individuals in this good work, appears from the following announcement, probably drawn up by himself, which appeared in the Evangelical Magazine for July, 1813, p. 277.

"The western part of the metropolis being comparatively destitute of a Gospel ministry, an attempt was made four years ago, to obtain ground for a chapel in the parish of Marylebone, which is supposed to contain 75,000 inhabitants. Several plots of ground were selected, but the landholders always refused, it is feared, from a dislike to the object. Lately, however, a most desirable situation has offered in the New Road, the corner of Harcourt street, which could not be neglected, by a gentleman, who has been encouraged by the

effort at Hoxton. He advanced for the chapel at that place, and for several enlargements between the years 1800 and 1809, upwards of £5000, nearly the whole of which, by his own diligent and unremitting attention, had, in 1811, been refunded. His rule—a rule to which he invariably adhered—was, to take *no interest*, but he did expect that the whole, or the greater part of the *principal* laid out on his large and costly London chapels, should be gradually repaid. As there appeared to be some peculiar difficulties in the way of accomplishing this at Paddington, he very generously, in the year 1835, gave up more than half of the balance then due (£5178. 10*s.* 4*d.*), and agreed to reduce the debt to £2500. It appears, also, that he gave up a balance of £268. 9*s.* on the school-rooms account.

> success which has attended the erection of Hoxton and Tonbridge chapels. A chapel was begun in March, capable of containing about 1500 persons, which will be completed at Michaelmas. May it not be confidently hoped that the friends of a Gospel ministry will liberally contribute toward the expense of the building? There will be space underneath the chapel for fitting up a large Lancasterian school-room."

The announcement of the opening services in the October number is concluded with this appeal:

> "A generous individual has advanced the sum of £5000 for the erection of Paddington chapel, but we hope that liberal Christians, and especially the opulent, will not permit him 'to serve alone' in this good work, but will come forward with large contributions; and others, according to their ability."

To this appeal there was no general response; but although the rich Dissenters of London, with scarcely an individual exception, instead of coming forward to help, left him in this noble work "to serve alone," yet he did not repent what he had done for the service of his God, and for the house of his God. He says, "I have great reason to be thankful for this opportunity of doing good to an immensely populous part of London."*

Previously to the opening of the chapel, he waited upon the late Rev. Basil Woodd, an excellent clergyman of the established church, who had long preached the Gospel with great energy and power in Bentinck chapel, very near the new building, for the purpose of explaining that the only reason for placing the chapel so near to that which he occupied, was that no ground could be obtained elsewhere. Mr. Woodd received him with Christian courtesy and kindness, and my father always spoke in terms of high respect of that valuable and useful clergyman, whose ministry was for many years a great blessing to a densely populous district. This fact may be mentioned in proof of the assertion which I make with all confidence, that although a firm and decided nonconformist, my father was no sectarian bigot.

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* The collection at the opening amounted to £133. 14*s.* and the late Joseph Stonard, Esq., of Stamford hill, Treasurer of Homerton College, sent a donation of £10.

Another extract from Dr. Philip's notes will supply additional particulars:

"The great concern manifested by him for the building of houses for the worship of God, particularly amidst the teeming and irreligious population of the metropolis, originated in his zeal for the Gospel of Christ and the conversion of men from the ways of sin to God, and not in a desire to advance the interests of a party, as was alleged by those who could not appreciate his motives; and on this principle he was in the habit of seeking the co-operation of good men of different denominations to assist him in his undertakings.

" After he had built Paddington chapel he sent notices to some of the respectable members of the church of England in that neighbourhood, informing them of the day on which it was to be opened for Divine service, and at the same time soliciting their subscriptions to assist in defraying the expense of its erection. One of the gentlemen to whom a notice of this kind was sent, wrote him a note in reply, in which he reflected upon his conduct in rather severe terms, for having built a place of worship so near to an episcopal chapel in which the Gospel was faithfully preached, and thereby encouraging schism and wounding the feelings of his beloved pastor. A few days after this, he received another note from the same individual, apologising for his former note, along with a subscription to the building. The gentleman in question had not consulted his pastor when he wrote the first note; and in the second note, he remarked, that having laid their correspondence before him, he found that his sympathy for the supposed feelings of his pastor (the Rev. Basil Woodd) was altogether unnecessary, that he approved of what Mr. Wilson had done, stated it as his conviction that such an additional place of worship was much needed in the neighbourhood, and expressed a hope that it might prove a blessing to it. I never had seen Mr. Wilson's spirit so much wounded as it was by the contents of the first note, and I have seldom seen him more rejoiced than he was at finding that his motives had been duly appreciated, and his conduct approved, by a minister of the establishment, whom, in common with all good men, he venerated and loved."

My father constantly attended this chapel for some years after the opening. There being three services on the Lord's-day, he generally remained in the vestry during the intervals of public worship, taking with him such refreshment as he and those members of his family who accompanied him might require. He also attended the week-evening services, assisted in forming the church, and in conversing with candidates for communion. In this matter, his opinion was decidedly opposed to all strict and rigid methods. He did not approve of requiring a written statement of religious experience as indispensable in all cases, but considered it sufficient that evidence of true piety should be obtained as the result of personal inquiries from the individual, and credible testimony from other quarters.

In a letter dated September 6th, 1814, he says, "Mr. Henry Townley tries Paddington chapel at Christmas, which may relieve me from constant attendance." Mr. Townley some time afterward received an unanimous invitation—cordially approved by my father—to become pastor of this church; but feeling in entire sympathy with my father's great principle, that usefulness should be the pole star to guide a Christian's course in this world, and thinking he could do more for the cause of God, by devoting himself to labour in the field of foreign missions, he offered his services to the London Missionary Society, and proceeded as one of their agents to Calcutta. An invitation was subsequently given to the late Rev. Dr. Fletcher, which he felt it right to decline accepting.

"The people at Paddington," says my father, "have been kind and affectionate." In confirmation of this I might introduce copies of two addresses voted at meetings of the church in two following years, expressive of affectionate esteem and grateful acknowledgment ot his liberality in erecting the chapel, and his fostering care of the infant church gathered there. The second address, subscribed by eighty-four names, congratulates him on the increase of the church and of the congregation, and on the opening of Sunday-schools, into which 400 children had been admitted.

My father undertook the providing of supplies for the pulpit of this, as well as for those of Hoxton and Tonbridge chapels. In a letter to the late Rev. John Sibree, of Frome, requesting that gentleman to preach at Paddington on three Lord's-days of April, 1816, he says, "I do hope you will stretch a point to serve this promising new interest. The chapel will contain about 1400, and the attendance is very encouraging; in the evening it is nearly full. When it was opened in September, 1813, I did not know of a single individual who would attend. Now there are above 100 members. To get acceptable supplies for three chapels is not very easy, but we hope to get resident ministers for two of them. . . . . . The population of Marylebone is nearly 80,000."

In 1818 the Rev. James Stratten, of Dublin, received an invitation from the church to become their pastor, which he accepted, and was set apart to that office Nov. 18.* He has continued to labour in this place since that period to the present with great success.

My father, in the summer of 1818, entered into an agreement for a lease, and subsequently purchased the freehold of land in the New road, Pentonville, near the Angel Hotel, Islington, upon which a large chapel—eighty feet in length and forty feet in width—with school-rooms at the back, was erected at his expense. It was called Claremont chapel, that name (then popular, from the residence of the late lamented Princess Charlotte) having been given to the adjacent square. The contract for building this chapel amounted to £4855; but the total amount expended (including cost of freehold—£675—and various extras) exceeded £7000. It was opened September 24, 1819, on which occasion Rev. Dr. Raffles preached in the morning, and Rev. John Leifchild, then of Bristol, in the evening. My father, recording the event, says,—"This place presents a fine sphere of usefulness. The publicity of the situation is likely to induce many who pass by, to enter a chapel in which sinners are invited [urged] to repent and believe the Gospel."

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* A sermon preached on this occasion by the Rev. William Jay was published.

The Rev. John Blackburn, of Finchingfield in Essex, who had been an acceptable preacher both at Hoxton and Paddington chapels, came up—at my father's request—to preach in this place during the month of March, 1820, and on the first Sabbath of that month dispensed the Lord's supper to the newly-formed church—consisting of about sixteen members. The following is an extract from my father's letter to Mr. B., dated February 22:

> "It is my prayer that you may come to us in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ.
>
> "The longer I live, the more convinced I am of the importance that the leading truths should be made prominent, and that they should be delivered with affection, animation, and application."

In a letter dated July 24, 1820, my father says: "I have the pleasure to inform you that your services at Claremont chapel proved acceptable and useful." A second visit in May, 1822, led to Mr. B'.s receiving an invitation to become pastor of the church, which he accepted. It was a circumstance peculiarly gratifying to my father's mind that a young minister who had been encouraged by him to enter Hoxton Academy, and "for whom," he says (Aug. 9, 1822,) "I always felt a strong attachment," should have been freely chosen to preside over this church.

Mr. Blackburn commenced his stated labours in this chapel on the first Lord's-day in October, 1822, and was set apart to the pastoral office over the church gathered there on the 16th, when Rev. J. A. James, of Birmingham, preached from Coloss. ii. 5 . . . . "Joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ."

In a letter to Mr. B., dated Aug. 9, 1822, my father says:

> "I am gratified by your acceptance of the call to Claremont. I do believe it will be for great good. . . . . . . It is most important that our eye should be kept singly directed to the glory of God. 'Commit thy way unto the Lord, and he shall bring it to pass.' It is my fervent prayer that you may be like Barnabas, 'full of faith and of the Holy Ghost.' I have no doubt that your whole heart will be in the important work. Do not let anything in the great metropolis draw you away from your peculiar charge and station.
>
> "You will perceive that a London congregation is much more changeable than a country one; therefore there should be a rich savour of essential truth in every sermon; and the more faithfully and affectionately it is *applied* to the experience and conscience, the more success you are likely to obtain. Be faithful unto death, and you shall receive the crown of life.

In another letter dated Leamington, Aug. 22, 1823, he writes: "I felt much gratified and obliged by the receipt of your kind letter. There is certainly great cause for thankfulness for what God has done and is doing at Claremont. I am glad that it has a humbling influence on your mind; that you can say—'Not unto me, not unto me, but unto thy name be all the praise.' How true it is, that if Christ be lifted up, he will draw all men! What an honour to be an ambassador to beseech sinners to be reconciled unto God! An affectionate application of Divine truth to the conscience, does wonders by the power of the Divine Spirit."

The following letter addressed by the newly-elected pastor to my father, will show the kindly feeling cherished toward him by the members of the church.

"*November* 30*th*, 1822.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I am happy to inform you, at the request of the church of Christ assembling at Claremont Chapel, that the statement of the cash account gave satisfaction, and the following resolution was passed with unanimous approbation:

"'Resolved, that the cordial thanks of this church be presented to Thomas Wilson, Esq., for the very kind, liberal, and conciliatory manner in which he has superintended the affairs of this society from its formation to the present time; that the statement of the accounts submitted this evening be entirely approved by this meeting, and that the earnest prayer of every member be offered to the great Head of the church, that his valued life may be long spared a blessing to his family, the church, and the world.'

"I rejoice, my dear Sir, in presenting to you this spontaneous and unpremeditated expression of regard from the people of my charge, and be assured that there is no individual amongst them who feels greater gratitude, or gives a heartier Amen to the resolution, than, my dear Sir,

"Your affectionate friend and servant,
"JOHN BLACKBURN."

The church at the time when Mr. Blackburn settled did not contain more than 100 members, but has since been greatly increased under his efficient ministry.

I cannot refrain from mentioning the indefatigable service rendered by a late valuable deacon of this church, Joseph Blower, Esq., now, alas! laid aside from active service by a seizure, in all probability the result of too strenuous and unremitting application to a variety of useful labours—who made an appeal to the congregation, with a view to induce them to make a prompt and vigorous effort to remove the debt owing to my father. This appeal was attended with success. During the first year of Mr. Blackburn's settlement several hundred pounds were paid towards the liquidation of the sum advanced for the building. Through Mr. Blower's persevering efforts a considerable sum was paid yearly, and in February, 1834, my father relinquishing £500, the whole was discharged.*

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* The balance due to my father April 10, 1823, was £6136. 15*s*., which, in less than two years, was reduced to £4550, and in five years more, to £2400.

In 1835, the church and congregation at Claremont chapel, as a tribute of respect and gratitude to my father, requested him to allow his likeness to be painted at their expense, by Thomas Uwins, Esq., R.A.

In the year 1821, my father's attention was directed to a piece of ground near Oxford street. The circumstances were remarkable. He had mentioned to Rev. Ingram Cobbin his wish to erect a chapel in the neighbourhood of Westminster, but ground was not easily to be procured. Some months after, a brother-in-law informed Mr. C. that Earl Craven had granted to him a long lease of the site of Carnaby market, with several contiguous houses, upon which he felt inclined to build a chapel; but he expressed some doubts whether his lordship would allow a Dissenting place of worship to be erected there. A prompt decision was necessary, and my father, on this occasion, as on others, acted promptly and decidedly. Application having been made from some other quarter, with a view to the building of an Episcopal chapel on the spot, only three days were allowed for deliberation and arrangement; but before these had expired, Lord Craven's consent had been obtained, and the terms of purchase agreed upon.

A contract was entered into in November, 1821, and in March, 1822, the foundation-stone was laid of a chapel, eighty feet in length, and fifty-eight in width within the walls, with rooms underneath, intended to be used for the instruction of children.*

This portrait was afterward presented to the Congregational Library in Blomfield street. The painter has not happily caught the characteristic expression of the features.

* In 1825 these school-rooms were fitted up by my father at a cost of upward of £1200. Recent alterations, with a view to additional room, increased light, and improved ventilation, have greatly augmented the previous accommodation.

The total cost was upward of £11,000, an amount much beyond what my father intended to advance, and greatly exceeding what he expected when the work was commenced; but after mentioning this fact, he adds, "I do not repent, for during the first year it has succeeded far beyond my expectation."

This was my father's last and greatest work of the kind in London, and in no other did he more clearly exhibit that spirit of noble daring, and unshaken confidence in God and his cause, which distinguished him through life. He had faith in God in habitual exercise, he also added to his faith courage, and in this instance that courage assumed an almost heroical aspect. All must admit, that it was a bold undertaking—some may even deem it foolish and presumptuous—to take a lease of a large piece of ground, and give orders for a chapel capable of affording accommodation to upwards of 2000 persons—knowing at the time of but few individuals who would attend; yet he acted with judicious forethought and prudent consideration. He knew that the ground he was about to take was surrounded by a dense and teeming population, chiefly of the *middle* class—a large proportion of whom would probably be disposed to attend when they saw a respectable and handsome chapel erected in the midst of them. He did not act rashly and unadvisedly in doing what he did. He well knew the lamentable deficiency in the means of evangelical instruction provided for a vast number of inhabitants in Oxford street, and the numerous streets on either side of it; and a providential opportunity presenting itself for securing suitable ground in the very centre of this populous district, he seized the favourable moment to obtain a sufficient portion for the erection of a spacious chapel. Although my father commenced this great undertaking upon his own individual responsibility, he had no wish to 'serve alone,' or to engross all the honour of this good work to himself. He issued a circular letter, dated November 11, 1822, in which he stated the lamentable destitution of the means of spiritual instruction in the western suburb of the metropolis; the difficulties that had previously been encountered in finding suitable sites, or in obtaining a site, when found; and concluded by an urgent appeal to the liberality of persons desirous of helping forward the Gospel of Christ, on behalf of this populous and extensive district.*

The chapel, which received the name of Craven Chapel, was opened December 11, 1822, when Rev. Dr. Collyer preached in the morning, and Rev. Thos. Adkins, of Southampton, in the evening.

A church was formed April 25, 1823, and the pulpit was for several years supplied by some of the most acceptable and effective preachers. My father for some time regularly attended the weekly prayer-meetings, and occasionally, in the absence of a minister, delivered an address. These plain discourses, he had reason to believe, were not in vain. A valuable body of deacons was chosen, and the members had increased to nearly three hundred in 1830, when Rev. John Leifchild, then of Bristol (now Dr. L.,) was invited to become their pastor. He was publicly set apart to that office March 16, 1831; and his labours have been attended with the happiest results.

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* The following contributors to this chapel may be mentioned—the late Daniel Lister, Esq., of Hackney, £100; the late John Broadley Wilson, Esq., of Clapham, £50.

In all the chapels built by my father in London (including the one at Hoxton) he was desirous to provide sittings for as many hearers as the space would allow, and made the comfortable accommodation of the hearers a secondary consideration. His object was, that the house might, as nearly as possible, be literally *filled.*

But little can be said in praise of the taste exhibited in these erections. They are all extremely plain, although substantial, and in their general character respectable; but Craven chapel, while externally it can make no architectural pretensions, is admirably arranged within, and its spacious and well-proportioned area renders it a noble place of worship.

The remark about to be made in reference to these particular chapels, may, with equal truth, be applied to a large proportion of the buildings appropriated to public worship which have been erected in England during the same period (1800 to 1822) by orthodox Dissenters. The very large amount expended upon them, might have been more judiciously and advantageously laid out. It should be remembered, that we do not dissent from the laws of order, the rules of proportion, and the principles of taste, which, being a part of natural truth, are eternal and immutable. Nor is there any equivalent advantage gained, even with regard to economy, by violating those laws and rules; for a neat and even beautiful church-building may be erected in a plain, simple, unadorned style, (the style, generally speaking, most appropriate,) at no greater cost than a rude and unsightly mass of bricks and mortar. In this respect, as in others, there has been a considerable improvement within the last twenty years. Perhaps a committee of taste would not be an undesirable thing, to which plans might be submitted, and by which designs and drawings might be furnished.

But if the architects of these chapels are not entitled to high commendation, no one will withhold the due meed of praise from my father for discernment in fixing upon *situations* admirably appropriate. He often expressed his regret that many old meeting-houses in London and elsewhere are situate in obscure streets or narrow lanes, where they cannot attract notice; and considered it very desirable that places of worship—particularly in large towns—should stand forth to public view, inviting passers to enter, that the voice of heavenly wisdom may be heard "by the way, in the places of the paths."

I may speak of the three chapels mentioned in this chapter, and of the congregations which now fill them, and of their ministers, with great propriety *together*; for what may be said of one may, with equal truth, be affirmed of all. The chapels are filled twice every Lord's-day—morning and evening—with serious and attentive hearers, a considerable number of whom are also, there is reason to hope, devout and spiritual worshippers. The number of persons constantly in attendance on these occasions is but little short of 5000, and the members of the three churches amount to nearly 2000. The ministers, of their own free choice respectively, have proved highly acceptable and attractive, as preachers, to the neighbourhood, and pastors after God's heart, who have fed the flocks committed to their care with true knowledge and understanding of his word. The churches, under their respective charges, have been "edified, and greatly multiplied—walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost." They have all diffused a beneficial and blessed influence through the neighbourhood in which they are placed. Day-schools, (containing altogether from 1800 to 2000 children,) and benevolent societies for visiting and relieving the poor and the sick, exist in connexion with all of them. My desire concerning these churches is, that they may be blessed and prospered more abundantly. "This also I wish, even their perfection;" and I believe a Christian church, seated in a populous and rapidly-increasing district, never can "go on unto perfection," until it seeks, by a voluntary diminution and decrease of its own members, an enlargement and extension of the general cause; thus proving that a spiritual community—truly called a Christian church—possesses not merely the power of perpetuating its own existence, and preserving its own purity, but also of multiplying itself. Then will our larger and more flourishing churches attain their highest honour—their most palmy distinction, when they become mother churches—mothers in the spiritual Israel; fruitful not only of members, but also of churches.*

It must have been a source of peculiar gratification to my father to see the pulpits of these three chapels so efficiently filled by ministers who had all received their collegiate training in Hoxton Academy; one of them his son-in-law, and both the others introduced into that institution by his own more immediate instrumentality. I have already referred to this fact in the case of Mr. Blackburn; and Dr. Leifchild has alluded to it, with reference to himself, in the excellent sermon preached by him at Craven chapel, on occasion

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† The following statement by Rev. Dr. Cox, will show that this practice has been adopted by the American Baptist churches with the happiest effect: — "The first [church at Lowell] having become crowded and overflowing, the second was formed by a friendly withdrawment of seventy members for the purpose. A procedure of this kind is characteristic of America. Instead of being held in union by mere selfishness, churches when they have attained to great prosperity, voluntarily divide, in order that the general cause may be enlarged. A new church is constituted in friendly connexion with that from which a number of members secede. From this another emanates, and yet another, till four or five, or more, multiply in gratifying succession. I can wish nothing better for our British churches than that they should emulate this generous, self-denying, and benevolent plan; a plan which has been marked in America with signal proofs of the Divine approbation."—The Baptists in America; by the Rev. Drs. Cox and Hoby. 1836. p. 146.

of my father's decease, in a very delicate and touching manner.[*]

I consider this practical exemplification of a noble spirit of Christian enterprise, in erecting three large chapels, almost entirely at his own expense, in less than ten years, at a cost of upward of £25,000, as the great fact in my father's life, and specially worthy of honourable memorial. It is, I believe, unique and unexampled—at least, I know of no similar case on record. The reader may also be reminded, that he not merely advanced large sums of money—altogether resigning all claim to interest, and uncertain what portion of the principal might be returned—of which, in fact, only about four-fifths were ultimately repaid, by yearly instalments, and not the whole of that during his life; the work also involved time, thought, strenuous mental exertion, patient waiting, and for some years, to a considerable extent at least, "the care of all the churches."[†] He worked laboriously, as well as gave liberally, during a long life; but in connexion with these three chapels, and the one at Hoxton, he "was in labours more abundant." [‡] Yet who will say that the time, and money, and strength thus expended were not well laid out? For although a large amount of property was thus rendered, in a worldly sense, unfruitful, yet it yielded even in this life a hundred-fold, in that highest joy resulting from a consciousness of doing good, and will, in a future state of being, yield fruit that will abound to his account, even unto life eternal. The interest and portion of principal relinquished, so far from being lost, were most profitably disposed of—laid out to the best advantage: so that, instead of being a loser, he will be, in the highest sense, an eternal gainer. It was bread cast in large portions upon the waters, which will be found after many days,—seed-corn scattered with no sparing or niggard hand, over a wide, a promising, and as it proved, a fruitful field, from which he will reap an abundant spiritual harvest. The number of persons born again in those places, already amounts probably to some thousands—a rich revenue of souls—every one incalculably precious; but how many have been, and will yet be born to God within their walls, cannot be known till the day shall declare it—the day when "God writeth up the people."

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[*] See pp. 27, 28, of the sermon entitled, "Piety the Best Patriotism."

[†] An arrangement has been made since my father's death with respect to the balance remaining unpaid on Paddington and Craven chapels. Both these, as well as Claremont chapel, are legally vested in trustees.

[‡] He frequently returned home after attending meetings, sometimes in the roughest winter weather, at a late hour in the evening. I find by a memorandum made March 13, 1827, that he was engaged from four o'clock in the afternoon till a quarter-past ten, in the vestry of Craven chapel, conversing with persons who were desirous of being admitted

It would not be too much, perhaps, to affirm that my father's labours in this department of service were the means of giving the first impulse to the recent

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into church communion, God having been pleased to "give testimony to the word of his grace" dispensed there, in a remarkable manner. One of his judicious helpers in this work, was the late Mr. William Summers, of Bond street.

efforts for church building in the suburban metropolis and larger towns of England. If his zeal in this great work did not " provoke very many " of his own denomination to go and do likewise, either individually, or by associating and combining together, it probably "provoked to emulation" members of the episcopal communion, who have done themselves honour by their large and liberal contributions to the work of providing increased accommodation for a rapidly-increasing population, most inadequately supplied with the means of public religious instruction. I feel bound, however, to add, that his example was not altogether lost on the metropolitan Dissenters, and I trust it is destined hereafter to produce more complete and full effect.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MY FATHER'S SUMMER EXCURSIONS—EFFORTS TO DO GOOD IN THE COUNTRY—INTEREST IN POLITICAL EVENTS—ENCOURAGEMENT OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS—CONCERN FOR IRELAND—VISIT TO THAT COUNTRY—FOR THE CONTINENT OF EUROPE—VISITS TO DEVONSHIRE, LANCASHIRE, AND DERBYSHIRE—EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.

MY father was accustomed to spend the whole or the greater part of the vacation allowed to the students of Hoxton Academy—a period of six weeks or two months—in comparative rest and retirement; but during this secession from his regular employment he was not idle. Besides writing many letters, he devoted much time to visiting ministers and churches. It might almost indeed be said of him, that in his journeys "he went about doing good." He had always an eye for natural scenery, and was an admirer of the beautiful and romantic; but, as Dr. Philip justly observes:

"In the occasional journeys which he was in the habit of making when the fatigues of his usual occupations rendered relaxation necessary for the improvement of his health, it was not the natural but the moral aspects of the country in which he took the deepest interest; and his admiration of the beautiful and sublime in nature, never kept him from inquiring into the religious condition of its peasantry, and how such as he found most destitute were to be supplied with the means of grace."

The present chapter will furnish more than one instance in proof of this. In a letter to the writer from Buxton, July 18, 1812, he says: "The cause is but weak here; Mr. —— is respected, but he wants more activity. I read some extracts about Bellingham last Sabbath evening at the chapel, which I hope will be useful.* The new church is finished very handsomely. It will be opened next month.

"The old minister at Bakewell is dead. I hope his removal will be for good. I expect to spend the ensuing Sabbath there, and then I shall hear more particulars."

The name which occurs in the preceding extract reminds me of an exclamation uttered by my father upon the tidings first reaching him of the assassination of the Right Hon. Spencer Perceval—the purport of which showed his rooted abhorrence of that Tory system of rule or misrule, which the sudden removal of that powerful minister opened a way for breaking up. He for a moment lost sight of the atrocity of the deed, and thought only of the beneficial consequences that might result to his country. But it may be fairly questioned—how far, according to the strict rules of moral propriety, the *man* should, on such an occasion, even for a brief interval, have been merged in the *patriot.*

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* These extracts were from a pamphlet entitled, "The Substance of a Conversation with John Bellingham, the assassin of the late Right Hon. Spencer Perceval, on Sunday, May 17, 1812. By Daniel Wilson, A.M., Minister of St. John's chapel, Bedford row."

His interest in public events and political changes continued with no abatement. In a letter written from Dublin in July, 1815, he says:

> "The death of Whitbread * is a severe loss to our country. It appears to have been entirely owing to mental derangement. How uncertain are all our earthly possessions! I have seen little news, but, from what I read at Limerick, it seems the French nation is in the utmost confusion. Paris is subdued, but the spirit of the people appears to rise against the House of Bourbon; and how can they enjoy civil and religious liberty, under the weakness and popish prejudice of that unhappy family?"

My father deeply felt the importance of communicating religious instruction to the children of the poor, in immediate connexion with the elements of useful knowledge. He was, from an early period of his public life, an active member of the Society for the Support and Encouragement of Sunday-schools, established in the year 1785, and has related in his MS. notes an affecting narrative which came under the notice of that committee in the year 1805, of a young female who was tried in Wales, and found guilty of the murder of her illegitimate child, who, although an intelligent girl, manifested so total an ignorance of religious truth, as greatly affected the humane and benevolent judge (Hardinge) by whom she was tried, and who, after exerting himself in a most Christian manner, and with happy success, first to awaken her conscience, and produce conviction on her mind of the evil of her conduct, and then to lead her to the only Saviour, Jesus Christ, for pardon and reconciliation with God—addressed a letter to the committee of that Society, lamenting that, for want of a religious education, so young and interesting a person should have fallen a victim to the law.

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* The late Samuel Whitbread, Esq., a patriotic and public-spirited member of parliament.

My father's efforts to promote the communication of religious—and especially of scriptural instruction to children on the Lord's-day, have already been noticed. I may add, that in the year 1813 he purchased two small freehold houses in Hoxton, very near the academy, which were taken down, and on the site two school-rooms—thirty-two feet by twenty-four, were erected for the accommodation of double the number of children then belonging to the Sunday-school, which had been carried on for twenty-seven years at the house of Mr. Kemp. The whole cost was £1500, which was gradually paid out of the annual income derived from the chapel, and also that of an additional room erected some years afterward. These premises were conveyed to six trustees.

In 1818 two side galleries were erected in the chapel for the children of the Sunday-school. The expense of these, amounting, with repairs, to £550, was defrayed out of the same fund.

He has done much for the great cause of general religious education—by providing accommodation for the daily instruction of many hundreds of poor children, as well as by direct contributions to that important object. I need scarcely mention that he was a warm friend and a liberal contributor to the British and Foreign School Society.

He urged all the young ministers who were sent out from Hoxton to "attend to the rising generation," and take care that no children whose parents attended their ministry should be unable to read or destitute of religious instruction; and was always ready to encourage them in setting up Sunday-schools, by the prospect of obtaining grants of books from the Society formed for the support of those institutions. May we not indulge the hope that, in connexion with *all* Dissenting chapels, not only Sunday-schools, but also infant and other day-schools will ere long exist? The subject, I venture to say, has not yet excited the attention which it deserves, and I may add *now* imperatively *demands*.

My father was deeply concerned for that misgoverned country—poor unhappy Ireland,—a country possessing immense natural resources and undeveloped capabilities, but a large portion of the inhabitants of which appear to be abandoned as a helpless prey to abject poverty and squalid wretchedness, and too many of them, as the consequence, to violence and crime—while, in reference to the great bulk of its religious teachers, (I mean the Roman Catholic priests, and I speak of them as *a body*, admitting that there may be individual exceptions,) the language of the prophet is too justly applicable: "The leaders of this people cause them to err, and they that are led by them are destroyed," Isa. ix. 16.

He had been one of the founders of the Hibernian Society instituted in London in the year 1806, for establishing schools and spreading the Gospel in Ireland. I believe he was for some years a member of its committee; he certainly became a life subscriber (of £10. 10*s.*) to its funds soon after its formation. After some years it was deemed expedient to alter the plan of that Society, and to restrict its objects to the establishment of schools, and the circulation of the Scriptures. This led to the formation, in 1814, of the Irish Evangelical Society, for the express purpose of introducing ordained ministers and other agents to preach the Gospel in that Galilee of the United Kingdom, that the people who sit in darkness might see the great light—a blessed consummation, alas! yet to be attained. My father was one of the founders and earliest patrons of this new society, to which he promptly gave £100. Of its committee he was an active and useful member.

In the summer of 1815 he paid a visit to Ireland, as a member of a deputation from that society. The principal object of this mission was to make arrangements for the erection of an academy house in Dublin.

My father was accompanied by Rev. Thomas James, now the secretary of the society, who had lately completed his term of study at Hoxton Academy, and shortly afterwards settled at Cork. They travelled through North Wales, crossing from Holyhead,—after a tedious passage of about thirty hours. From Dublin they set out on the 13th July, accompanied by Rev. William Cooper, of that place, on a tour to the south of Ireland; the ministers preaching at several places by the way. They visited Carlow, Kilkenny, Clonmell, thence proceeded to Clogheen, and across the tremendous mountain of Knocknadown, from the summit of which they suddenly obtained a magnificent view, to Lismore. They then visited Youghall, Cork, Fermoy, Mallow, and Limerick—returning to Dublin on the 23rd.

From that place my father travelled alone to Newry and Belfast, and thence crossed to Scotland. In a letter to the author, dated July 22, he says:

"Mr. Cooper and I returned last evening from a tour of 500 miles in the south. The country is rich and fertile, the towns are large and populous, but, were it not for a few Gospel ministers in the churches, and some Wesleyans, darkness would cover the land, and gross darkness the people. The poor Roman Catholics are under the domination of the priests, who keep them in the grossest ignorance—so that they do not even know who is the Saviour; but expect all they want, from the priests—who do nothing without money. Oh, how has Ireland been neglected! Mr. Wilks was highly acceptable at Dublin. Ground is obtained in a good situation, on which an academy house is to be built, suited for ten students, with a small chapel annexed. Six young men have offered as students. I intend to set off for Belfast on Monday, and to proceed to Glasgow as fast as I can. Early in August I hope to be in Edinburgh.

"P.S.—Yesterday we travelled eighty-four English miles—rising at five."

My father's concern for Ireland was not a passing emotion, but an earnest and permanent sentiment, manifested by a readiness to help it in the same manner in which he had already done much to help many places in England. In 1818, he undertook to assist in providing ministers for York-street Chapel, Dublin.* Referring to that circumstance, in a letter, (July 9,) he says, "Poor Ireland! little has yet been done for it." After having seen, with his own eyes, its deplorable destitution, he was ready to do what he could for that neglected country, and he well knew that the best thing that could be done for it, was to supply its perishing population with the pure Gospel of salvation. In this year, Dr. Charles Townley undertook to collect £1000 for a new chapel at Limerick; toward which, my father gave £100. Dr. T. and his mother gave each £100, and the Committee of the Irish Evangelical Society voted an equal sum.

The following portion of a letter, dated August 6th, 1816, to the author, then at Antwerp, will show my father's earnest desire to promote the spread of the Gospel on the continent of Europe:

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* He had given £10. 10*s*. toward the erection of this chapel in 1805.

"We received your letter of the 30th ult., from Rotterdam. I was glad to perceive that you felt so desirous to pay (had it been possible) the last tokens of respect to a much valued relative, [my grandmother.] We never can be sufficiently thankful for a religious education, and for pious ancestors. God has not favoured many families as he has favoured ours.

"Life appears to me more than ever short, and as it is introductory to an eternal state, what manner of persons should we be! Our duty is to love God supremely, and our neighbour as ourselves. To accomplish this in any degree, we must possess the grace of God. We hope your present excursion will premote your future usefulness, by enlarging your views, and exciting a public spirit subservient to the spread of the Gospel. I trust something will be done by the [London] Missionary Society for Flanders, and also for France. I think Paris should have a suitable minister to preach in English and French. I believe great good would be done, even to the Society, if they would send ministers to Ostend, Bruges, Ghent, Brussels, and Antwerp. We must follow Englishmen on the continent with the Gospel of Christ."

I need scarcely mention, that my father was one of the early patrons and supporters of the Continental Society, formed in the year 1818, and, according to its original constitution, embracing evangelical Christians of all denominations. He also aided, by liberal contributions, the noble efforts of the Rev. Mark Wilks, for promoting the religious education of children and the preaching of the Gospel in Paris.*

Early in July, 1818, he set out with his family, for a tour into Devonshire. He had not decided, when he set out, at what place to stop, but he fixed on Dawlish, a small town on the southern coast, where he remained three weeks. One motive for this determination probably was, because he found that "the weak interest there needed help." He had been the instrument, several years before, of originating the movement which led to the erection of a small chapel in this place. At the ordination of one of the Hoxton students, at Teignmouth, my father was present, and at a meeting of ministers and friends, urged the claims of Dawlish on their attention. A subscription was immediately commenced, a committee formed, and shortly afterward, a chapel was built at a cost of £600, of which Rev. Ingram Cobbin, then of Crediton, who kindly undertook to collect funds, obtained £400.* My father gave £20. In a letter from this place, dated July 31, he says, "I hope our coming here will be attended with some good. The new interest languishes for want of management, and the supplies they get are not suitable." He then refers to a minister who had lately seceded from the Church of England, at Exeter, through whose influence certain doctrinal errors of the Antinomian class were spreading in that neighbourhood. In another letter, he thus writes: "I heard a sermon last Sabbath morning, describing the righteous as justified by Christ, but not a word on internal purity. The preacher said, 'The law neither commands nor condemns.' They give up the personality of the Holy Spirit, and of course say nothing of his work. What a mercy to be kept in the good old way, and how necessary to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints!" During this visit, he spoke several times at the chapel himself, and provided more suitable preachers than the one referred to. He also attended an association-meeting of ministers at Exeter, and no doubt endeavoured to stir them up to more active and strenuous exertions, for the extension of the Gospel in that dark county. He spent a day or two in Dartmouth, and an offer made by him, of £10, for an additional gallery in the chapel, for the use of the Sunday-school, led to its being built. He also recommended a young minister, educated at Wymondley, to a congregation at Paignton, near Totnes.

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* He gave twenty guineas to the Continental Society, and £150 to chapels and school-rooms in Paris.

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* See Congregational Magazine for 1825, pp. 606, 607.

Before quitting Devonshire, we spent ten days at Ilfracombe, and my father gave £10 toward a new chapel then being built in that town, the former being decayed and too small. Soon after our return, he thus writes to Rev. John Blackburn, Sept. 3, 1818: "Through the goodness of God, we returned safe home last week. We have had a pleasant journey through Devon. I hope the time was not altogether lost, as it regards usefulness. The cause of Christ is evidently gaining ground everywhere, but labourers are scarce."

In whatever place my father made a temporary sojourn, he never forgot his official character, as treasurer of Hoxton Academy. At Liverpool, in 1819, he obtained not fewer than twenty-eight new annual subscribers. He was in Manchester on a memorable day, August 16th, when the late celebrated political demagogue, Mr. Henry Hunt, was engaged to harangue the assembled operatives of that populous town and neighbourhood. He was a spectator of that extraordinary scene—witnessed the vast crowd assembled in a spacious area—saw the cavalry enter the ground, and gallop, sword in hand, among a quiet, unoffending multitude; and thus had, himself, satisfactory ocular evidence, that the attack made by the soldiers upon the people, by order of the magistrates, was on the part of the latter—its real authors—"a wanton, cruel act of despotism."

In the vacation of 1822, my father visited his brother-in-law, in Derbyshire, and was requested to address the villagers, which he did, at Middleton, near Youlgrave, and two neighbouring hamlets. On the first Lord's-day evening, two ladies, (sisters,) who previously felt strong prejudices against Dissenters, were induced to walk three miles to attend, for the first time in their lives, a dissenting place of worship. Their attention was fixed, and there was every reason to believe that to one, if not to both, on that occasion, the Gospel came, not in word only, but also in power, and in demonstration of the Spirit.

In a letter dated Leamington, Aug. 22, 1823, he says: "I have been a week at Manchester, where I obtained ten new subscribers to Hoxton Academy.

I have since visited Mr. Bateman, [then high-sheriff of Derbyshire.] The poor villagers gladly pressed to hear the word of life, and I have the gratification to find that the plain truths which I delivered last year have been blessed to the salvation of one, and I hope of two persons," [referring to the ladies just mentioned.] In the same letter he says: "I have derived much benefit from the quietude of a country life. Were it not for the college, I would gladly retire from the bustle of the metropolis."

I may here mention that no consideration would ever induce my father to prolong his sojourn in the country beyond the time fixed for the first meeting of the committee after the vacation.

The following extracts from letters to one of the individuals just referred to, will be read with interest, as evincing my father's concern for the spiritual welfare of particular individuals and their families:

"*Castle Street, City Road, London,*
6 *Sept.* 1823.

"MY DEAR MADAM,

"I have often reflected on the agreeable interview I had, when I called at your house in the last month. I cannot be sufficiently thankful to the God of all grace who honoured me as a very humble instrument in communicating to you and your dear sister spiritual good, during my visit at Middleton last year. How wonderful are the ways of Providence, which inclined you to come over to that place on the first occasion of my addressing the poor villagers! Was it not something like St. Paul being directed to go to Macedonia, where he found by the river-side a company of females, and while he preached, the Lord opened the heart of Lydia to receive the glad tidings of salvation?

"I recollect the fixed attention you gave, and I doubt not the Lord had prepared your mind to receive Divine truth. Blessed be God, who only doeth wondrous things!

"The account you gave after one year had elapsed, delighted my heart, especially to find the happy influence produced on your family. . . . . Be encouraged by the assurance that when God begins a good work, he will carry it on, and perfect it at last in glory everlasting. A good old author says, 'True Christianity is not a *notion*, but a *nature*. It is laid in the very constitution of the soul, a new principle implanted by God in the highest powers of the soul, refining and spiritualising all the faculties thereof, and rendering them as much like to God himself as such a creature can resemble its Creator. Heaven itself is nothing else but a perfect conformity, a cheerful and eternal compliance of all the powers of the soul with the will of God; so that as far as a godly man is thus conformed to God, and filled with his fulness, so far is he glorified upon earth.'

"Our Saviour says, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.'

"Everything connected with *Him* has light and gladness thrown around it; and 'to those that believe He is precious.'

"* * * * * With much Christian affection I remain, dear Madam, yours sincerely,

"THOMAS WILSON."

"Dec. 3, 1823.—I hope this will find you in better health, but especially that you enjoy soul prosperity. I was much gratified by the decided attachment to Divine things, which your letter manifests. What an inexpressible mercy that you can now rejoice in God as your covenant, reconciled Father in Christ, and with the Psalmist exclaim, 'Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee!' You now feel your obligations to that Redeemer who gave his life to procure your pardon, and who is gone into the holiest of all as your intercessor and forerunner. Thus have you found that peace which passeth all understanding—you have experienced that principle of Divine love which is the fulfilling of the law, and which enables you to love all who bear the image of Christ, of whatever denomination they are. You can now suffer persecution, for all that will live godly in Christ Jesus must do this, more or less. But he has promised, that if we suffer with him here, we shall be glorified with him hereafter.

"I please myself with the thought that you have a good minister in —— church. Perhaps you may like to know somewhat of my engagements. I leave Highbury place about ten in the morning, and come to town for three or four hours, where I receive letters, and have many callers. In connexion with keeping the accounts of the academy, I have to provide supplies from the country for two chapels, one adjoining the academy, the other lately erected at the west part of London—called Craven chapel, which will seat 2000 persons. I generally attend both places on the Sabbath. On week evenings I have to attend prayer-meetings and lectures at these chapels, or committees elsewhere. I occasionally give an exhortation at a prayer-meeting, and speak to the poor females at the Penitentiary and the Guardian. I bless God that at both these institutions I have had instances of success.

"I have to lament that my own vineyard is not more cultivated. I have to complain of an evil heart of unbelief. The Christian life is indeed a warfare!

"I hope your family are all well. I know you feel the importance of training up your dear children in the ways of religion. A deceased relative of mine used to say, 'Teach a child that God is always present, watching its heart and thoughts as well as its words and actions, and you have done much for it. If you feel anxious to form your children after holy rules, look out for holy companions for them; never permit any one to associate with your family, whom you would not wish your children to imitate when they grow up.' "

"Manchester, July 20, 1824.—It gave me much pleasure to learn that your mind was still fixed on that covenant God who has loved us with an everlasting love, and who has promised never to leave or forsake us. I trust Jesus the friend of sinners is precious to you, as he is to those that believe. Last Sabbath afternoon I addressed some females at the Penitentiary at this place from Hosea xiv. 1, 2; and visiting a friend last evening at a village about four miles distant, I addressed the poor people from Judges xiii. 22, 23. I mentioned the following particulars, as reasons why we need not fear the displeasure of God: 'If we are convinced of the evil of our past conduct—if we feel the total depravity of the human heart—if we are satisfied of the insufficiency of this world to make us happy—if we see something of the excellence of Jesus Christ—and if we desire to be made holy.' Perhaps these hints will afford you some encouragement."

"Dec. 8, 1824.—It affords me pleasure to learn that your health is improved, and particularly that you are going forward in the Divine life. What a mercy that God has distinguished you above others, by imparting to you His Holy Spirit—causing you to feel your own unworthiness and sinfulness, and to flee for refuge and for rest to Jesus, the friend of sinners! I rejoice that Christ is precious to you, that you love Him, and long to be with Him. He is indeed 'the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely.' His service is perfect freedom, and in keeping his commandments there is great reward. . . . We have had the last three sabbaths Dr.

Raffles of Liverpool, at Craven chapel. It will seat 2000 persons, and he has completely filled it. . . . . An old author says, 'Those who are most holy are most humble.' May we grow in self-abasement, and learn of Him who was meek and lowly in heart! . . . . Through mercy, Mrs. W. is greatly improved in health. We may well say, 'What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?' Our time is short; may we do all we can for the glory of God in this very sinful world!"

"October 21, 1826.—I trust the Lord is carrying on this work of grace in your heart; that your faith in the Son of God is strengthened, and that your love abounds towards him and all the saints. Our great aim should be to glorify God, that we may enjoy him for ever.

"I hope that by the blessing of God on your careful instructions and example, your children will rise up and call the Redeemer blessed. I beg your acceptance of an excellent work of the late Rev. John Newton. Some of the letters may afford you encouragement in your way to heaven."

These letters afford a clear insight into my father's own spiritual feelings. They show that his religion was an inward principle deeply seated in the affections of his heart, while habitually powerful in its operation on the actions of his life. They also prove that he had made considerable attainments in true holiness, and especially that he had "grown in self-abasement." There was, in fact, no grace which he more highly estimated, no one which he more diligently cultivated, and no one, I may add, in which he more excelled, than that great master virtue of the Christian character—humility.

CHAPTER XIX.

UNREMITTED ATTENTION TO THE AFFAIRS OF HOXTON ACADEMY—DEATH OF DR. SIMPSON, AND APPOINTMENT OF SUCCESSOR—ADVICE TO THE STUDENTS—INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT HALL.

The demand made upon my father's time and thoughts by the concerns of the chapels built by him in London, and by various other public engagements, did not divert his attention from his one chosen object—Hoxton Academy. He adhered to that with a steadiness of determination and a tenacity of grasp which nothing could relax. In most of his letters—even those evidently written in great haste—reference is made to the state of the academy—the number of students, and the need of additional pecuniary support; but although the state of the funds was generally unfavourable, and other circumstances were sometimes discouraging, nothing could deter him from a vigorous prosecution of his great work.

In the year 1817 the institution was deprived of the valuable services of its resident and theological tutor, Dr. Simpson, who had long been a blessing to it by his thoroughly orthodox theology, his deep-toned piety, and his ardent zeal. The inroads of disease on his athletic frame compelled him to resign the office of tutor in May, and his death took place in December. His letter of resignation concluded with these characteristic words: "Wishing that my successor may be as much superior to me in literature as Hugh Grotius was to the common run of scholars, and in divinity as Dr. Owen to the common run of divines, I remain," &c. Dr. Simpson was distinguished for the vehement ardour of his love to the Gospel, and he possessed the happy art of kindling the soul, by infusing the intense feelings and emotions of his own glowing spirit into the breasts of his pupils. His evening prayers in domestic worship were of the most melting and thrilling description, and while thus engaged he often rose to a sublime rapture of devotion.

The choice of the committee ultimately fell upon the Rev. William Harris, of Cambridge, (afterward Dr. Harris,) who accepted their unanimous invitation in October, and entered upon the duties of his office shortly after. In a letter dated July 29th, 1818, my father writes, "The Lord has done great things for Hoxton, particularly in directing us to a pious, amiable, well-furnished resident tutor. The only thing we could wish is, that he had a stronger constitution. I am greatly relieved by his wisdom, prudence, and attention to the more minute things."

My father still continued the kind friend and faithful adviser of the students, and of the younger ministers who had been educated at Hoxton. In a letter to the Rev. T. Stenner, dated January 29, 1817, requesting a collection for the academy, he says:

"The times are against our finances. We have lost many subscribers by failures, as well as by deaths.

"You do not know the calls [for pecuniary contributions] that I have on all sides. I hope my endeavour is to be a faithful steward of what God has been pleased to commit to my trust. I am sorry whenever I hear of any minister keeping a school; for I think all his time and talents should be employed in the important work. Great application and much zeal are necessary. I very much fear that many of our young ministers are indolent and lukewarm. I do not apply the remark to you, but all need the caution, for [this tendency] grows imperceptibly.

"Hoping that you will see increasing success, and that you will still feel the importance of applying the truths of the Gospel powerfully to the conscience, and be kept faithful unto death, I remain," &c.

To the same minister, in a letter dated October 20, 1814, he had thus written: "I sincerely trust you will be a more extensive blessing than ever at Dartmouth. You must exert all your powers, both in the study and in the pulpit."

The following are portions of letters to the Rev. William Lothian, now of St. Andrew's:

"*City Road, February 5th,* 1818.

"DEAR SIR,

"I thank you for your respectful letter of the 29th ult. It gave me pleasure to find that you had a safe though tedious passage, and that you were in good health.

"Your stay at Stirling will hardly allow you to judge of the ultimate prospect. I confess, unless the congregation is likely gradually to increase, it does not appear to me to be a sphere of sufficient usefulness to induce you to settle there. As the Gospel is preached faithfully both in and out of the Establishment, it is to be considered whether an Independent interest is necessary in that town. May we not suppose that most of the people attend some place of worship? If the neighbouring villages are neglected, and you could preach in them in the week without injuring your health, that might bring some to hear you on the Sabbath. If you see it your duty to make a longer trial, I advise you not to be hasty in accepting the pastoral office. If you do not meet with the desired encouragement, and still incline to devote your services to Scotland, it may not be worth while to return to Hoxton; but you may look out for some other station where they are more in want of the bread of life, or where it is handed out with such indifference that few are induced to partake. Perhaps you may obtain a sphere of usefulness in the north of England, should you not find such in your own country. * * * *

"Our new tutor is universally beloved, and appears exactly the person suited for Hoxton; for him we must feel thankful to the great Head of the church.

"In order to gain ground in Scotland, the ministers of our denomination must imitate the best of our English preachers. They must combine clear views of the Gospel with a judicious arrangement, and a lively, affectionate, and applicatory address to the experience and the conscience.* Variation of voice and proper emphasis are important. It must be preaching *to* the people, not *before* them.

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* This remark would seem to involve a reflection more general and indiscriminate than was intended. My father, in a letter to Mr. Lothian dated July 19, 1826, says, "Mr. Russell (Rev. Dr. Russell, of Dundee,) preached excellent sermons in London; I was much pleased with him."

"Let me hear when you have determined about Stirling, and be assured that your happiness and usefulness will always gratify, dear Sir, your sincere friend,

"THOMAS WILSON."

"Nov. 23, 1818.—Your letter of the 29th October gave me much pleasure, as it did also our respected resident tutor, Dr. Harris. I think you did quite right to leave Stirling, as there seems no need of another station in a place where the Gospel is generally and faithfully preached. * * * *

"I am glad you do not despise the day of small things. Recollect the promise, 'Be not weary in well-doing, for in due season you shall reap if you faint not.'

"St. Andrew's, from your account, is an important station; the number of inhabitants is considerable, and the University gives it additional importance; for your acquaintance with some of the students, and their hearing you preach, may have a powerful influence by the blessing of God; and such individuals will carry the savour in various directions. Let me advise you to recollect what lively, faithful, and experimental preachers you have heard in the metropolis, and, as far as you see their excellency, imitate them. * * * *

"Preach every sermon as if it were your last—knowing nothing comparatively but Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

"Let me advise you, while you come out from the world, not to become a *recluse*. Your usefulness is connected with civility and attention to every person as opportunity offers, especially the rising generation.

"Dr. Philip and his family sailed last Wednesday from Liverpool for the Cape. May Christ's kingdom soon rule over all!"

"Nov. 11, 1819.—It affords me much pleasure to find that you are fixed in an important station, and that the Lord is affording you in various ways encouragement to proceed. I trust more hearers will be induced to attend, and that bigotry will gradually subside.

"I hope that you enjoy much of the Divine presence, and that you are full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. I need not say, give your congregation *the Gospel* plainly, affectionately, with suitable animation and application, always remembering that Jesus says, 'I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.'"

To another young minister he thus writes—a year or two later:

"I feel gratified that your services have so far proved acceptable and useful as to induce the members and subscribers, with very few exceptions, to invite you to continue.

"As Providence has led you to ——, and as you find the sphere of usefulness extensive, I am inclined to recommend your acceptance of it.

"I can easily suppose that you may have some peculiar trials and difficulties in being an assistant; but you must expect in all places to meet with affliction and trouble. We are born to them, and they are to God's people over-ruled for their growth in grace. Eminent piety, great prudence and circumspection — connected with deep self-abasement and humility, a close study of human nature, a full and constant exhibition of the great truths of the Gospel, delivered with affection and animation, and with application to the conscience and experience; put all these together, and you may expect much greater success than you have yet experienced. May you be directed from above is the sincere prayer of," &c.

The following communication from the Rev. John

Sibree, of Coventry, recently addressed to the author, will show that added years of life and more extended observation only tended to confirm my father's previous views concerning the topics and manner of preaching:

"The most delightful periods of my college and ministerial life are associated with the memory of your late much honoured and lamented parent. While I was a student, he always treated me with the affection and fidelity of a father; and happy should I be, if I could retain in my memory, and practise in my life, all the wise and pious counsels I received from him during my college course. He was in the habit of requesting some of the students to call at his counting-house on the Monday morning, on their way home to the academy, after supplying chapels in the country on the previous Sabbath, on which occasions he made faithful and yet affectionate comments on the style, mode of delivery, &c. of their sermons. But while he freely mentioned and condemned what he deemed to be faults, he did not withhold commendation on points which he considered as deserving it. Thus, while I have entered his presence with trembling steps and a palpitating heart, I have left it wiser and better, I trust, for the interview; and I have no doubt that many of the students derived as much benefit on the subject of preaching, from the faithful and friendly lectures of 'the Chancellor' (if I may be allowed to adopt our old college cognomen) in the counting-house in Castle street, as while sitting at the feet of our rabbis in the lecture-room. He well understood what kind of preaching was most acceptable, and most calculated for usefulness. As to the *matter* of preaching, he would exhort us to keep to what he called the three R.'s—Ruin, Redemption, and Regeneration ; and as to the manner, he ever and anon enforced the importance of *animation*. 'Sir,' he would say, with a stroke of the chin, and wave of the hand—which none of us can ever forget, 'you must preach not only with your tongue, but with your eyes, your countenance, and your whole soul and body.'

"He was deeply anxious to see all the students, when their college course had terminated, comfortably settled and usefully employed. He manifested great wisdom generally in his recommendations of students to destitute congregations ; maturely studying mutual adaptation; and it has been the unspeakable happiness of many of our churches and ministers that he had the place for the man, and the man for the place. It was justly remarked by Dr. Leifchild, in his funeral sermon for your honoured father, that he was looked upon to an extent beyond any other man as the friend and father of ministers, and the purveyor of the church for a succession of pastors. This important object he was constantly pursuing, by looking out for young men of suitable gifts, bringing them forward, countenancing them in the course of their preparatory studies, and introducing them subsequently to appropriate spheres of labour.

"It was in consequence of a visit to his late friend

Mr. Whittem, at Coventry, in the summer of 1819, that I became a resident in this city. During his visit he was informed that the church at Vicar lane was destitute of a pastor, and at the solicitation of the deacons he engaged to send to them a student; he subsequently requested me to supply the pulpit for three weeks, which I did, and which led to my settlement. He kindly came to my ordination, and always took a lively interest in my prosperity, as an evidence of which I subjoin the following extracts from letters containing some very salutary hints of advice:

"'*April* 10*th*, 1820.

"'DEAR SIR,—I was sorry not to be within when you called. Most sincerely do I wish you to experience great prosperity. Perhaps a few short hints of advice may be acceptable. Let me say, Rise early, and do not sit up after eleven. You will find it necessary to be a close student, and it is important that you should retain and improve your classical knowledge, and constantly read the Scriptures in their original languages. *Stand* at times in your study, and take exercise [in the open air]. Neither receive nor make any visits before dinner. Be exact in keeping the time for family worship in the morning, (eight o'clock is our time to a minute,) and be at home as much as possible for family worship in the evening. Don't make a confidant of any person; and make short visits. Never wait for a congregation, but begin worship at the exact time. I think if you preach thrice on the Sabbath, you should not preach on a week evening, at your own place, at least for the first year; for it is more important that you should acquire knowledge, and lay up a store, than give out so freely that your mind may be exhausted, and the people think lightly of your services. Aim to excel both in your matter and manner. Never decline in animation or affectionate application. Let every sermon have the evangelical stamp. Much depends on the exercise of prudence, combining firmness with kindness. After you have impartially and deliberately considered the path of duty, be *resolute* and *decided*, and 'let integrity and uprightness preserve you!'

"'You know that we have made room for forty students. The question is, How are they to be supported? Will you look round and see if any of your friends can give us an annual subscription? I must beg that the first public collection may be for Hoxton.'

"'Nov. 8, 1821.—I am delighted to find that God is still smiling on your ministrations in Coventry. That city was the birth-place of my late mother and uncle. Ichabod was once written on the walls of Vicar lane,* but the desert is changed into the garden of the Lord; and the chapel at West Orchard † being built and rebuilt is an additional matter of thankfulness.

"'May you persevere and exert yourself as far as opportunity and strength will allow. I hope you resolutely devote *all your mornings* to close reading and study—always aiming to improve, both in the matter and the manner of preaching."

The following extracts relate to the building of a new additional chapel, in a large town, at which a student had lately gone to settle:—

"November 5th, 1822. I might have answered your letter sooner, but I wished to obtain Dr. Harris's opinion, as in the multitude of counsellors there is safety. The Doctor thinks you have no reason to fear that the new chapel will prove the ruin of your congregation, if you stay in the old one. I have found apprehensions of this sort to be groundless. If you live in the affections of your people, and your preaching is attended with the demonstration of the Spirit and with power, persons will come to hear. My advice is, to wait through the winter and see what are the movements of Providence. If you are diligent at your post and work for God, he will take care of his own cause. It is not in the power of man to injure that. 'Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' The sheep, I trust, will not be scattered, as they have an under-shepherd going before and watching over them.

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* The chapel in which Mr. Sibree preached, and where he still continues to labour acceptably and usefully.

† Of which Rev. John Jerrard (who succeeded the late Rev. George Burder) was the valuable and much-esteemed minister.

"I trust the spirit of independence among your people, will rouse them, as soon as their judgments are convinced that something requires to be done. You must then stimulate them to exertion, and endeavour to secure united operation. Unless they are willing to devise liberal things, nothing can be effected. If God disposes them to lay down their contributions, the way will appear plain [for the erection of another chapel in a more convenient situation].

"You must have a convenient place for teaching the poor children. It should be well considered whether the present chapel might not be converted into school-rooms. May you be directed from above!"

"March 19th, 1823. I feel obliged by the respect you manifest towards me, and the more, because I have lately been treated by some at Hoxton with marked indifference, to say the least, notwithstanding my desire to serve pious young men, intended for the ministry, which has been my employment for nearly thirty years. . . . . .

"I admire your prudence in keeping a strict neutrality, and hope you will do all in your power to conciliate and to preserve peace. If the majority of the congregation are still for a removal to a more central situation, I hope it will in due time be effected. Could you not stimulate the backward, by getting their consent, provided £700 can be raised before the building is commenced, and then set to work to raise that sum? This is a time when the most vigorous efforts should be used to improve our opportunities for doing good. One chief mean is getting commodious places of worship in the most eligible situations. The leaders in the church establishment are active in building large and handsome churches. Let dissenters then be up and doing.

"The little usefulness which you speak of in past years, and the want of love, forbearance, and courteousness, call aloud for great grace in the minister, who should be full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, not shunning to declare the whole counsel of God. 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' Your example, your preaching, and your pastoral efforts, must have effect, in due time, with the blessing of God."

The last letter contains reference to a painful subject,—a spirit of insubordination, which had risen among the students of Hoxton Academy, leading them, under the influence of strong temporary excitement, to make a combined resistance to the authority of the committee, but which terminated in their submission. On such trying occasions, my father uniformly exhibited the characteristic qualities of his mind—firmness, energy, and decision, animated by a strong sense of duty. Referring to this "very unhappy dispute," he says, "Knowing that the committee were right, I felt no uneasiness for the result." So well did he exemplify in his own conduct the advice which he was accustomed to give to the students: "Do that which is right, and fear not; God will take care of his own cause." This, indeed, was a lesson which he himself had learned, at a comparatively early period of life—that in the discharge of present duty, we may quietly leave future events and consequences to the supreme Disposer.

To the same minister, my father writes some years later:

"January 18, 1825. It is difficult for me, at so great a distance, to know what advice to offer [as to his removal]. You have considerable difficulties, but where can we go to be free from trouble? If the congregation declined, if no members were added to the church, if the Sunday-school diminished, then I should think it was your duty to seek another station. As these things have not occurred, but, on the contrary, additions have been made, it appears to me, that your duty is to remain for some time longer, provided you have reason to believe that the attachment of the people to you, as their minister, continues. You should train up the rising generation by meeting the young men and women separately, once a month, or once a fortnight, giving them subjects to think of, and to bring an account, in the way of proof, &c.

"You must take care to keep up the life of religion in your own soul; and then you will manifest activity and zeal in all that you do, as a leader of the congregation. The old saying is, 'Like priest, like people.' If you can get a few persons to meet together at one another's houses for religious conversation, reading, singing, and prayer, there may be times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

"Improve events, and endeavour to make your sermons interesting and impressive.

"I trust you will be directed from above."

As years advanced, my father became more deeply sensible of the extreme importance of satisfactory attestations by competent persons, to the natural abilities, and various desirable and requisite qualifications of candidates, applying for admission into dissenting academies. He desired, in order to secure this, that careful *previous* inquiries should be instituted, and the concurrent opinions of the pastor and deacons, and, where it could be obtained, of the church also, to which the candidate belonged, should be deliberately taken, and formally expressed. He thought that ministers who take upon themselves the solemn responsibility of recommending a candidate, should endeavour, by previous investigation, to satisfy themselves, not merely concerning the piety, intellectual capacity, and mental habits of the young man, but also concerning his natural temper, aptitude for communicating knowledge, and gift for public speaking. The qualifications indispensable for an efficient discharge of the ministerial office, especially so far as that office consists of public oral teaching, are much more original endowments than acquired abilities of any kind—certainly, than those literary and scholastic attainments which can be made in a college. My father's long experience had convinced him that, although collegiate training was immensely important, yet suitable materials must be supplied, or we can never hope to obtain that which the world requires, and the church has a right to expect—not mere scholars, but what both much more need—powerful preachers, "eloquent men, and mighty in the Scriptures." He often mentioned the words of Mr. Hordle, concerning Spencer: "He was *born* a preacher;" and his efforts were perpetually directed to find out, encourage, and bring forward such *native* talent, and original aptitude for the work.

I shall conclude this chapter with a fact, which, I have no doubt, encouraged my father, as he thereby obtained confirmation of his views, in reference to preaching, from high authority. In the year 1821, he spent a Lord's-day in Leicester, and twice heard the greatest of modern preachers—Robert Hall. The next morning he took breakfast with that extraordinary man at his own house, by invitation, and has left some notes of the conversation which took place. The following are extracts: "Mr. Hall said, 'Preparation for the pulpit is everything. If I had prepared more for the pulpit, I should have been a much better preacher. There are heights, and depths, and breadths, and lengths, in eloquence yet to be explored.'

"I took the liberty of suggesting the importance of more attention being paid to the application of the subject 'You are quite correct, Sir,' he replied; 'the celebrated Mr. Fox was an example of this kind. He generally attempted to place his ideas in different points of view, in order to impress them more fully upon the mind. I intend in future to enlarge my applications.'

"He said, 'I am reading Matthew Henry's Commentary regularly through, and discover new beauties in it every day.'"*

My father had long been a great admirer of Matthew Henry's Exposition, for its rich vein of evangelical truth, its point and pungency, the author's lively strain of remark and illustration, his happy art of illustrating Scripture by Scripture, and thus making the Bible its own interpreter. This book has been a blessing to the Christian church, and will, probably, to the end of time, maintain its place in the estimation of the most competent judges, as, in its own order, unrivalled.

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* The following extract from Greene's 'Reminiscences of Robert Hall,' will farther show his opinion concerning his work: "He observed, 'I have often read portions of it, and consulted it, but I have now begun with the first chapter of Genesis, and I mean to read the work through regularly; I have set myself two chapters every morning, and I anticipate it as a feast. That is the way to read Matthew Henry, Sir. I discover new beauties in him every day, that are not obvious when reading detached parts. I would advise you to adopt the same method, Sir; you will be quite delighted with it. I have found that the most pious persons of my acquaintance, in the latter period of their lives, have been great readers of Henry. There must be something next to inspiration in him, for as face answers to face, so does the heart of one Christian to another.' I asked (says Mr. Greene) his opinion of Scott's Commentary. 'Oh, it is a good work, Sir, but it is not to be compared to Henry: there is not that unction of spirit which there is in Henry.' About a month after this, he said, 'Well, Sir, I continue my plan of reading Matthew Henry every morning, and have come to the second chapter of Exodus; and am more and more delighted with him."

CHAPTER XX.

MY FATHER'S EFFORTS TO RECOVER OR PRESERVE CHAPELS AT KENNINGTON, WALWORTH, CHERTSEY, MARKET DEEPING, TEWKESBURY, AND OTHER PLACES—HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARD THE BUILDING OF NEW CHAPELS AND THE RAISING OF NEW CONGREGATIONS IN VARIOUS PLACES IN NORFOLK, LINCOLNSHIRE, &C.

My father's increased engagements in connexion with the large chapels built by him in London, did not cause him to withdraw his attention from other parts of the metropolitan suburbs, or from other neglected or inadequately supplied places. He still continued to seek out, or to avail himself of opportunities that offered, for obtaining possession of chapels that were shut up, or in danger of being closed, and of assisting or encouraging others, in efforts that were made to raise new congregations in destitute places.

In the year 1816, the parties who held the chapel near Kennington common, wishing to dispose of it, he advanced £800, to purchase the remaining term (about twenty years) of the lease, with the understanding that the *principal* should be repaid by yearly instalments of £80. The year following, Rev. Robert Hunt became the minister, the service of the Church of England being still read. The congregation increasing, it was found necessary to erect galleries, toward which my father contributed £50. The yearly instalments were regularly paid for several years, and when more than half had been returned, he expressed a wish that the remainder should be cleared off. This was done through the exertions of Mr. Hunt, who gave £50 himself, and my father a like sum. As the close of the term approached, my father declined to renew the lease, and Mr. Hunt not feeling it right to incur that responsibility, the remaining term was assigned to a person who intended to conduct public worship in it according to the form adopted by Dissenters; but it was shortly after made over to an evangelical clergyman; and the building, which was originally an assembly room, was afterward opened and has since been used as an Episcopal chapel.

The congregation was in a flourishing state under Mr. Hunt's ministry; and, had not peculiar circumstances connected with the mode of conducting the devotional services induced that gentleman to withdraw from his official relation, might have furnished a permanent addition to the regular Independent churches.

In 1818 my father purchased, for £500, the lease of a chapel in West street, Walworth, certain parties promising to repay £100 yearly, till the whole of the *principal* was returned. In this chapel, the worship of God and the preaching of the Gospel, have since been regularly maintained.

In the same year, in conjunction with the late Mr. Joseph Procter, of Compton terrace, Islington, he made application to the trustees of an old meeting house at Chertsey, in Surrey, proposing that the endowment should be secured to an aged minister, whose preaching had ceased to be efficient, for the remainder of his life, on condition that he should resign his charge. This proposal being accepted, my father gave £20, and Mr. Procter £10, for the first year. Mr. Thomas Stratten,* from Hoxton Academy, was appointed to preach at this place during the next vacation; and under his ministry, the congregation much increased.

In 1815, my father sent Mr. Holland† to preach in a new chapel at Market Deeping, which had been closed, in consequence of the minister, for whom it was erected, being compelled to leave that place. A person who had advanced £140 on the security of the chapel, threatened to sell it, but consenting to release all future claim on receiving £100, my father paid that sum. In May, 1818, he visited the place, and had the gratification of seeing the work of the Lord advancing there.

In the summer of 1816 he spent a Lord's-day at Lynn, in Norfolk. He also visited Dereham and Wells, and shortly afterward gave £10 toward an enlargement of the Independent chapel at the former place, and £50 toward a new chapel at the latter.

In 1818 his attention was directed, I believe by the late Rev. Samuel Lowell, of Bristol, to the very low state of the congregation at the old Presbyterian meeting-house, Tewkesbury. In 1820, Mr. Henry Welsford was sent from Hoxton Academy, to preach at that place, and his services proving acceptable, he received an invitation to settle there, which he was encouraged to accept, by my father's offering £20 toward his support for the first year. He also gave £20 toward repairs, and repewing of the chapel. Mr. Welsford still continues the minister. The chapel has been enlarged, and a numerous congregation now meets there.

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* Rev. T. Stratten, now of Hull.

† Rev. J. K. Holland, now of St. Ives, Huntingdonshire.

In July, 1819, he gave £50 toward a new chapel at Salford, near Manchester, at which one of the Hoxton students who settled as the first minister, succeeded in raising a large congregation.

In 1819, he gave £10 toward the fitting up of a place of worship at Brentford, and for one year he paid a weekly sum to the students who preached there. "Brentford," he says, "is a very dark place, and I am afraid there is but very little desire among the inhabitants to hear the Gospel." In 1830 he gave £100 to a new chapel at that place.

In the same year, my father gave £50 to a new chapel at Norwich, (Princess street,) which was built in consequence of one of the Hoxton students, Mr. John Alexander, being sent to preach at the Tabernacle in that city, in 1817. The foundation stone of a chapel, sixty-seven feet by fifty-two, with three galleries, and accommodation for one thousand persons, was laid by Mr. Alexander, March 16, 1819. March 8, 1820, an Independent church was formed, consisting of fourteen members, which, in April, 1822, had increased to 129. The first student sent, proved here, as in other places, the person adapted to the place, and under his efficient ministry, the church has continued to flourish and increase.

In a letter to the Rev. John Blackburn, then of Finchingfield, dated March 17, 1819, my father thus writes :—

" I am glad to find that the Essex Union are desirous of extending their efforts. There is much land, I believe, yet to be possessed, even in Essex. The village of Stanford Rivers has frequently occupied my thoughts. I pay £190 a year tithe to a clergyman who only reads a sermon on a Sabbath morning. . . . . The village, which is three miles from Ongar, contains no Sunday-school, and few children will go so far as that place. The labouring people are very ignorant, and have very little means of instruction. I conversed with the minister at Ongar, [the late excellent Rev. Isaac Taylor,] and learned that there are districts near Stanford Rivers that much need the Gospel. I have a cottage on the turnpike road, which would be very suitable, and I would wish to have it occupied as a Sunday-school in the afternoon, and for preaching in the evening."

My father would have sent students from Hoxton to preach at this place, at an earlier period, but could not for some time obtain the consent of any person to receive them into his house. This obstacle, however, being removed, the cottage was fitted up and opened as a place of worship, Oct. 20, 1819. A student came weekly to preach, and the attendance was very encouraging, so that, in a few months, it was proposed to enlarge the cottage; but a gentleman in the neighbourhood offering to give £100, if a small chapel was built, and the tenant offering the same amount, my father engaged to make up the deficiency, and such a building was erected, which was opened June 27, 1820. A church was formed, of which Rev. William Temple, now of Essendon, Herts, was several years pastor. In the year 1832 the chapel was raised several feet, and otherwise much improved; but the church being for some years destitute of a pastor, and losing, by death and removal, its most valuable members, was broken up. An attempt has lately been made, to "strengthen the things that were ready to die," and already, a considerable Sunday-school has been collected by the exertions of the minister now settled there—Rev. H. Cock. The soil is unpromising, but by diligent cultivation, under the hand of a faithful labourer, it will, I trust, not prove ultimately unproductive.

It may be worthy of record that the clergyman of this parish (the Rev. Dr. Dowdeswell, one of the canons of Christ-church, Oxford,) always treated my father, and was treated by him, with gentlemanly courtesy. The Nonconformist landowner purchased a pew in the parish church for the use of his tenants and their families, and the rector—instead of angrily resenting the erection of a Nonconformist chapel—

manifested a disposition rather to vindicate and defend than to resist and oppose the attempt thus made to promote education, morality, and Christian instruction in the parish. I believe he gave my father full credit for the sincerity and purity of his intentions. I mention this circumstance to show that, even in villages and rural districts, Nonconformist worship and preaching *may* be peacefully carried on by persons who act with a determination to give no just cause of offence. It must, however, I fear, be acknowledged that there are too many clergymen who exhibit a very different spirit from the rector of Stanford Rivers.

I proceed to give some account of a very important movement in the county of Lincoln, which arose, under providential direction, out of a memorable event which happened in the year 1818. A pious, evangelical, devoted curate at Long Sutton, in Lincolnshire, after a faithful discharge of his duties for three years, was dismissed by his diocesan—not for any acts of immorality, or any unsoundness of doctrine, or negligence in pastoral duty—but for preaching sermons too much in accordance with the Articles of the church, and in too earnest and energetic a manner, and also for discharging a duty which, at his ordination, he had promised "with all faithful diligence" to perform. The congregation felt aggrieved by this summary and severe proceeding, but no redress could be obtained, either for them or for the injured curate, although the churchwardens, overseers, and above five hundred parishioners addressed letters of remonstrance both to the vicar and to the bishop.*

The reader will peruse with interest the following communication from Rev. William Holmes, of Wisbech, who from the beginning was an eye-witness of the facts which he relates:

"At midsummer, 1817, I was sent by the committee of Hoxton Academy to Wisbech, where, through the previous twelve months, an effort to raise an Independent congregation had been made by another individual, which proved a signal failure. On the evening previous to my departure from Hoxton, I received the dying blessing of my beloved and venerable tutor, Dr. Simpson, who, within forty-eight hours after, entered his eternal rest. To the fervent and impassioned supplications of that dear man of God on that solemn occasion, I have often been inclined to believe I was greatly indebted for the success of that holy and arduous enterprise on which I set out. A very powerful impression was produced at Wisbech during that midsummer vacation. The temporary place of worship, a large wool-chamber capable of holding about 300 persons, was crowded, and some striking instances of conversion occurred. The people were very desirous that I should at once settle amongst them, but having been but a short time at Hoxton, and reluctant to forego its advantages for at least another six months, I left them with the promise to return the following Christmas, on condition that they would then set to work in good earnest to erect a chapel. In the close of 1817 I resumed my labours at

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* See 'The Curate's Appeal and Farewell; a Sermon preached in the parish church of Sutton St. Mary, in the county of Lincoln, on Sunday, December 28, 1817, by the Rev. S. Maddock. 1818.'

Wisbech under highly encouraging circumstances. A few weeks after I entered on my work here, the Rev. S. Maddock, the excellent curate of Long Sutton, nine miles off, was summarily turned out of his curacy by Dr. Tomline, the Bishop of Lincoln, on the following grave charges—that he preached Calvinistic doctrines; that he took the Bible into the pulpit with him; that he introduced Watts's Psalms and Hymns into the church, and held a weekly prayer-meeting in his own kitchen. His bereaved flock, hearing of the prosperous state of things at Wisbech, proposed my commencing a week-night lecture among them, feeling, as they expressed it, 'as sheep having no shepherd.' Eight or nine poor praying men of Mr. Maddock's congregation walked over for several sabbath mornings to worship with us, and with tears importuned me to come over and help them. A large barn, capable of holding about 350 persons, was fitted up, and I commenced a Thursday evening lecture there, which was regularly carried on for three months, though the winter was very severe. To my astonishment, the barn from the beginning of my labours there, was well filled—not merely with the poor of Mr. M.'s congregation, but also with persons belonging to the higher classes of the inhabitants. At the expiration of three months, as my health was beginning to suffer, from the heavy pressure of ministerial duty at home and in the neighbouring villages, I prevailed on my Long Sutton friends to allow me to apply to Hoxton Academy for help; and Mr. T. Evans, now of Shaftesbury, was sent down. Now came the trial of the principles of our friends who had seceded from the establishment. Mr. Evans, of course, immediately commenced Sabbath services in the barn, and no small struggle they found it, as some of them assured me, to pass by their venerable and beautiful church as the bells were chiming the hour of prayer, to worship in the humble conventicle. They, however, did so. They rallied round their new minister, although he had not received episcopal—nor indeed at that time any other public ordination to his work. Mr. Evans's preaching was highly acceptable, and he soon commenced the erection of a chapel.

"While this and our chapel at Wisbech were in progress, your dear father, with whom we were in frequent correspondence, and who greatly cheered and helped us on in our work, suggested, that he thought there was a fine opening for a new cause at Boston. We lost no time in taking preliminary steps for such an attempt. Mr. Evans went over to reconnoitre, collected a mass of important information on the subject, and by your father's direction and assistance, hired and fitted up the 'Guard-room,' as it was called, in Pen street, as a place of worship. A week-night lecture was established there, which was sustained by Mr. Evans, myself, and several neighbouring ministers. The attendance from the outset was large and encouraging, and it was soon found necessary to send to Hoxton for further help. Mr. W. H. Cooper, now of Dublin, was appointed to enter into our labours, which he did with great energy and surprising success. He was followed by another of our fellow-students, Mr. B. Byron, late of Newport, Monmouthshire; and to him succeeded Mr. Haynes, now of Bristol, when a large and handsome chapel was erected, towards the cost of which Joseph Claypon, Esq., now a deacon of the Independent church at Paddington chapel, munificently contributed. A church was formed, over which my beloved brother, Rev. T. Haynes, most usefully and honourably presided for many years. In the early part of Mr. Haynes's pastorate similar aggressive movements were made by him and others in the higher parts of Lincolnshire, up to the cathedral town itself, which resulted in the course of a few years in the erection of spacious chapels, and the formation of flourishing churches in the towns of Horncastle, Spalding, Louth and Lincoln."

I presume some additional particulars of these chapels and congregations will be acceptable to the reader.

My father, after spending Lord's-day, May 31, 1818, at Market Deeping, as already mentioned, visited Wisbech and Long Sutton. The people at the latter place were then hesitating whether they should build a chapel. He, not being specially attached to barns as places of meeting for religious worship, urged them to do this—offered to give £20, and £10 toward the support of the minister for the first year. "This (he says) settled the business, so that they purchased ground and commenced the building of a chapel."

The following statement has been drawn up at the author's request, by the person to whose active efforts it chiefly relates:

"When application was made to Hoxton College for a student, Mr. T. Evans was sent by the committee, Mr. Wilson engaging to defray all expenses. This was viewed with deep anxiety, as the critical period which would decide whether the secession was the effect of sound religious principle, or the mere offspring of caprice. The success far exceeded the most sanguine expectations. The people were equal to the trying occasion, and proved faithful to their professions. A spirit of anxious inquiry was excited; the temporary place was soon found too small, and the congregation were induced to give permanence to their separation from the established church, by resolving to build a house for God in which they and their posterity might worship him according to the dictates of their own conscience. As a proof of their sincerity they subscribed more than half the cost of the spacious and substantial chapel, before a stone was laid. The building was opened February 10, 1819. On the following sabbath the late Rev. R. Alliott, of Nottingham, assisted by Mr. Evans, formed a church on Congregational principles, and administered the Lord's supper.

"This may fairly be regarded as the rise of Independency in North Lincolnshire. From hence sounded forth the word of the Lord into the region round about.

"Mr. Evans on visiting Boston ascertained that while the population exceeded 12,000, there was not accommodation for more than 5000 in all the existing places of worship. He resolved to attempt the forming of a new congregation there, and submitted his plan of intended operations to Mr. Wilson, who cordially approved of it, and liberally engaged to pay the rent, and the expense of fitting up a temporary place.

"During a second visit to Boston Mr. Evans proceeded to obtain a room for temporary use. Having examined some premises which appeared suitable for the purpose in a part of the town destitute of religious instruction, he waited on the owner and asked 'What rent do you require?' 'Twenty pounds a-year,' was the reply. Mr. Evans engaged to take them, and drew up an agreement, which was signed by both parties, each having a copy. He then said, 'Mr. C., do you know the purpose for which I have taken your room?' 'Yes,' he replied: 'I have been told it is for the hardware business.' 'No,' said Mr. Evans, 'your information is incorrect; and although you have signed the agreement which I hold in my hand, I think it right to tell you the use I intend to make of your room, and if you disapprove of it, I will put the agreement into the fire—I want it as a temporary place of worship.'

The owner smiled at his mistake, and said, 'Well, though I am not a religious man myself, I do believe the thing is badly wanted, and you shall have the room, Sir; for I am sure the religion that leads a man to act so honourably must be a good thing for the town; I will attend with my family, and will throw back two pounds a-year towards meeting the expenses, as you say they are paid by voluntary contributions.'

"The room was accordingly fitted up at Mr. Wilson's expense, and persons flocked to hear the word of God, which was preached in it every Tuesday evening for three months, generally by Mr. Evans, who rode from Long Sutton, a distance of twenty miles."

The following passages are from my father's letters to Mr. Evans:

"Sept. 3, 1818.—I am glad to hear that the chapel is being built, and that you are encouraged to proceed.

"I quite approve of the plan concerning Boston. I have no objection to be answerable for a trial of six months; in that time you will see the disposition of the people as it regards attendance and support."

"Nov. 16, 1818.—It gives me much pleasure to learn that the cause of Christ goes on well at Long Sutton. I trust it will prosper much more when the new chapel is ready for the congregation.

"The commencement at Boston is truly pleasing, and I hope in due time we shall see great things effected there by the blessing of God."

"Feb. 25, 1819.—Your letter, received this morning, affords me considerable pleasure. I congratulate you on the pleasing prospects at Long Sutton."

"July 13, 1820.—I read your letter of the 4th instant with much pleasure, as I perceived that you were using every exertion to do good both at home and abroad. The diligent hand maketh rich.

"I trust you attack no party, but preach the truth in love.

"As you have received an unanimous and affectionate call to the pastoral office, and have had a sufficient time for trial, I cannot hesitate advising you to be set apart by ordination.

"We have great reason to be thankful that the work goes on prosperously. We have sent Mr. Soper to make a beginning at Louth.

"Through mercy we are all in tolerable health; but the best of my days are over.

"May you be kept watchful and prayerful, zealous and prudent; giving no offence, that the ministry be not blamed!"

The new chapel at Wisbech was opened December 9th, 1818. My father gave £20, and advanced £100 on loan, without interest, for two—afterward extended to four—years. In a letter to Mr. Holmes, dated June 9, 1818, he says, in explanation of his not giving a larger sum, as he had done in some other places: "The people [at Wisbech] can and do exert themselves, and there is a certainty of raising a large and respectable congregation. I have many calls [for pecuniary aid], and must, therefore, divide and distribute wisely what I can spare. .... You need not be afraid, for the cause is God's." Ultimately, however, he *gave* the £100, as will appear by the following document:

"*Wisbech, October* 27, 1823.

"VERY DEAR SIR,

"We, the undersigned, as members and friends of the church of Christ, of the Independent denomination, assembling in Castle square Chapel, Wisbech, embrace the earliest opportunity, after the return of our beloved brother and respected deacon John Robinson, from London, of expressing our deep sense of obligation to you for the very lively interest you have taken in our affairs, from the period of our association up to the present time, and respectfully request you will accept of our most grateful acknowledgments for all the friendly counsel you have afforded us, for the many prayers we feel persuaded you have presented to the throne of heaven on our behalf, for the donation of £20 towards the erection of our place of worship, for the loan of £100 for the space of four years without requiring any interest, and for the last and crowning act of your munificence and Christian sympathy in giving the whole of that £100 towards the liquidation of our chapel debt; to the whole of which kindness and liberality we desire thankfully to ascribe, under God, much of our present prosperity, and the pleasing prospect which now opens upon us of great and growing success.

"We further intreat that you will feel assured it is the earnest prayer of every one of us, that it may please the great Head of the church to spare your valuable life yet many years to come, and render you, as we feel persuaded it is your heart's desire, a still greater blessing to the cause of Christ at large, but most especially to that important branch of it in which, as the treasurer of Hoxton Academy, you have so long and so successfully employed your talents, property, and influence. And we beg here most sincerely to assure you, that to that invaluable institution we shall ever feel ourselves very deeply indebted, and shall esteem it our duty, and happiness, and privilege to contribute, individually and collectively, all we are able, towards its encouragement and support.

"With every wish that the choicest blessings of the new covenant may continually descend on you and every member of your family, and in the humble hope of uniting ere long with you and them around the throne of God and the Lamb, in celebrating the riches of redeeming love throughout eternal ages, we remain, dear Sir, most gratefully yours in the bonds of Christian affection,

"W. HOLMES, Pastor."

This document is also subscribed by two deacons and thirty-seven other persons.

At Boston, the three Hoxton students already named who were sent at my father's expense, preached in succession a month each on Lord's-days, as well as during the week, and so great was the effect produced by the blessing of God, that it was resolved to build a chapel. An individual offered to give the land, and subscriptions amounting to more than half the cost of the building were spontaneously promised. A respectable and commodious chapel was opened in October, 1819. My father's contributions to this place, including a donation to the new chapel, amounted to £100, and never was that sum laid out to better advantage. A large congregation supporting its own minister has been raised, and by the very liberal aid of Mr. Joseph Claypon, the chapel is now quite free from debt.

Mr. Haynes, the student from Hoxton Academy who settled at Boston, became a new agent, employed by my father in extending the good work, having authority to hire and fit up rooms at his expense in other towns. A temporary building was engaged at Louth, to which place, in July, 1820, another student, Mr. Soper,* was sent and supported by him, for three months. Great interest was excited, multitudes flocked to hear, and on Lord's-day evenings as many were listening outside the building as those within. The result was, a pressing invitation from the regular hearers to Mr. Soper to become their minister, and a subscription for the building of a new chapel. To this my father contributed £50; and in 1831, he gave £50 toward reducing the debt on this building.

At Horncastle a few individuals, desirous to promote the cause of Christ and the salvation of their fellow-sinners, commenced, in 1821, the erection of a small Independent chapel in which the Gospel might be regularly preached. They applied to the committee or the treasurer of Hoxton Academy, requesting that a student might be sent. The individual selected was Mr. John Pain, who proved " the man for the place." Toward a larger chapel my father contributed £25, and afterward £10 in aid of the subscription for erecting a gallery.

The following extract from a letter of Mr. Pain's—who continued minister of this congregation till his decease in 1844—written in May, 1822, contains more particulars:

" I laboured among the people for seven sabbaths, and then returned to Hoxton Academy to finish my course of study. In a short time I received an invitation, signed by upwards of 130 individuals, soliciting my return. With this I complied—engaging to spend two or three months in July following, in ministering the word of God to them. At the expiration of that period, circumstances seemed to determine this as the part of the sacred vineyard where the great Husbandman had appointed me to labour. I therefore acceded to the wishes of the people.

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* Rev. Richard Soper, now of York.

"The congregation rapidly increasing, a more commodious place of worship was rendered necessary. The walls of the chapel were not sufficiently strong to admit of galleries, and ground could not be procured to enlarge it. After much deliberation and prayer to the great Head of the church for direction, it was resolved to erect a new building of sufficient dimensions to accommodate those who seemed desirous of attending the means of grace. In the month of September a piece of land, eligibly situated, was purchased, and the foundation of a new edifice, 36 feet by 50, was laid. March 28, 1822, it was opened for worship. A church has since been formed, from whom I received an invitation to become their pastor. To this I consented, and on May 10 was publicly ordained. Prospects are now highly encouraging. The chapel is regularly filled by attentive hearers, and in not a few instances, real spiritual benefit appears to have been imparted. It deserves to be mentioned, to the honour of the Wesleyan Methodists, that, during the erection of the present Independent chapel, they willingly lent their own on Sabbath mornings and Wednesday evenings to accommodate the congregation; an instance of liberality and Christian charity which shows that they desire to hail as brethren all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, and are animated by a true desire to promote, by every means, the cause of Christianity."

In the vacation of 1819, a student from Hoxton Academy, Mr. Gear,* was sent to preach in an old

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* Rev. Wm. Gear, now of Bradford, Wilts.

General Baptist chapel at Lincoln. Great attention was excited, and a new chapel was erected, which was opened November 8, 1820. To this my father contributed £50. By his request, the present minister, Rev. S. B. Bergne, supplied the vacant pulpit at the close of 1830. Subsequently to Mr. Bergne's undertaking the permanent charge, the congregation greatly increased. After three enlargements, to which my father contributed about £50, he urged the erection of a much more spacious edifice in a more central situation, which was accomplished in 1840, and to which he contributed £100. The old chapel is also used for public service.

In December, 1819, a student, Mr. Matthew Jeula, was sent to Spalding, where a building, capable of receiving about 400 persons, had been fitted up with a view to raising a Baptist congregation; but the attempt not succeeding for want of efficient preachers, it was offered to Mr. Haynes. Mr. J. met with great encouragement. My father paid £70 for the expenses of this place, according to agreement; the congregation undertaking to support their minister, and erect a new chapel, Feb. 15, 1820.

In 1820, Mr. Roberts,* a senior student in Hoxton Academy, was sent to Melton Mowbray, in Leicestershire, where a pious aged clergyman, the late Rev. Dr. Ford, had then recently retired from preaching. At my father's request, an active deacon at Leicester (the late Mr. Joseph Nunneley) had previously gone to Melton, and engaged the use of a theatre. Mr. R.'s preaching excited great attention, and important results followed. Dr. Ford invited him to his house, and promised five guineas toward a new chapel, which was built in 1821. My father contributed £50.

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* Rev. James Roberts, now of Birmingham.

At the commencement of the vacation in 1821, a student from Hoxton Academy was sent to preach in the theatre at Market Raisin, in Lincolnshire, and was supported by my father for three months. A chapel was afterward built, toward which he gave £50; but not being vested in trustees, it sank under an oppressive and overwhelming burden of debt. In December, 1827, my father used arguments to stimulate some parties connected with this place to a prompt and vigorous effort to shake off the incubus, by a conditional offer of another £50, but unhappily without success. One saying uttered by him on that occasion is worth recording: "We shall never be really poorer for what we do for Christ's cause."

In 1822 my father, on his return home from Derbyshire, visited Grantham and Newark, two large towns either altogether destitute of, or very inadequately supplied with that grand panacea of our diseased race—that "healing balm for every wound"—the Gospel of salvation. At Grantham, he found a young man who had received no literary advantages, preaching in a mean chapel, to a very small congregation. Considering such an agent to be quite unsuitable for that place, he prevailed upon him to withdraw, and place himself for a year, at his expense, under the care of Rev. Walter Scott, who for many years undertook and efficiently discharged the labour of preparing young men, by preliminary instruction, for admission into Hoxton Academy. He then sent one of the senior students in that institution, the late Rev. Alfred Dawson, (afterward of Dorking,) who proved to be "just the person wanted in that respectable town." The congregation rapidly increased, and a larger chapel was opened in October, 1823. My father presented the land on which it stands, the cost being £150. In 1829 he gave £50 toward the removal of a debt on this building.

At Newark he stopped for a Lord's-day. He had previously purchased land there for a chapel, for which he paid £277. In that large town there was only one parish church. In the afternoon he went to that place and heard a sermon by the clergyman from Matt. xi. 28, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Yet, strange to say, there was "not a word in his whole discourse about Christ"—from whose lips these gracious words proceeded, and who in so benignant a manner invites the weary soul labouring under the burden of sin to come unto himself, for that rest, solace, and refreshment which a guilty conscience can obtain from no other source.

The following communication, lately received from Mr. Roberts, will supply farther particulars concerning the chapels at Melton, Grantham, and Newark.

"In 1820 I went, at the request of Mr. Wilson and the committee of the Hoxton Academy, to spend the vacation at Melton Mowbray. Some valued friends at Leicester, among whom Mr. Joseph Nunneley, deacon of the church in Bond street, a man of untiring zeal and activity and extended liberality, was conspicuous, had communicated with Mr. Wilson on the subject, had requested an agent to be sent, and had hired the theatre as the scene of his primary labours. To that town, without the knowledge of an individual in it, accompanied by the excellent Rev. Edward Webb, of Leicester, I proceeded. On the following Sabbath I opened my commission in the theatre; about fifty people were present in the morning, from 150 to 200 in the evening. Thus unbidden, though kindly treated and respectfully heard, we commenced the Independent congregation at Melton, which from the beginning had testimony of the approbation of God. The Divine presence from the first seemed to be much enjoyed, and the power of the truth was manifested. The theatre was soon crowded, and barely sufficient space was left for me in the front of the stage to address the assembly.

"The period of my stay was, by permission of the Hoxton committee, extended from two to three months, at the end of which I returned, rejoicing with your venerated father in the results of my visit, the expenses of which, with the exception of the rent of the theatre, were defrayed by him. In December following, I spent another month at Melton, and soon after the congregation there, although yet without a chapel, and looking forward to all that the undertaking would involve, presented me with an invitation, signed by about 200 persons, to become their minister, offering me £120 a-year as a salary. So grew spontaneously the spirit of voluntaryism, with the knowledge and love of the Gospel. After much deliberation and prayer for direction, I decided to accept this invitation, in preference to another from Chatham, to become co-pastor with the late excellent Mr. Slatterie, over a church to which I was much attached. I did so, and had my reward.

"In May, 1821, I laid the foundation of the new chapel, which was opened in September, by the late Rev. R. Alliott and Rev. Robert Hall. A church was formed, and I was ordained in July, 1822, on which occasion your honoured parents were present. Into that church I was privileged, during my pastorate of upwards of twenty-four years, to admit 181 members. To the erection of the chapel Mr. Wilson gave £50. In 1837 it was enlarged by a gallery and spacious school-rooms, towards which he gave £50 more.

"In a short time I reconnoitered Grantham, and found, with a little arrangement, an opening there. I assisted to lay the first stone of a new chapel with my dear college friend, Rev. Alfred Dawson, the first pastor. To that chapel Mr. Wilson's first donation was £150; another was subsequently added.

"Acting under the same auspices, I visited Newark, and negociated for the purchase of land, for which Mr. Wilson paid about £280. Such was the state of Newark at that time, that no place could be obtained for preaching, while the chapel was being built. One attempt that was made to fit up a temporary place for worship was frustrated, after men had been employed about it for a day or two, through the predominance of a party in the interest of a nobleman who has acquired celebrity for asserting his right to 'do what he will with his own.' At the opening of the chapel, as if God would not delay to affix his sanction to the undertaking, the sermon preached by Rev. James Stratten was attended with Divine power to a man who became most devoted to the cause of God, and for several years before his death sustained the office of deacon in the church."

The foundation of the chapel at Newark was laid by Mr. Roberts, October 24, 1822. The building was opened for Divine worship, March 27, 1823. For some time it was supplied by students from Hoxton, which led to the settlement of Rev. Charles Williams, who for many years laboured diligently and successfully at this place. A Congregational church was formed, November 3, 1824, of which Mr. Williams became the pastor. The congregation at Newark have been called to contend with great difficulties and much opposition. In June, 1828, in consequence of the almost insupportable pressure of a heavy debt, the chapel was advertised for sale by public auction. It was described by the printed bills as a substantial building, of handsome elevation, eighty feet in length and forty-eight in width, with a burial-ground attached, eighty-four feet by twenty-eight, and a plot of land, one hundred and twelve feet by eighty-eight. Happily, however, it was rescued, chiefly, I believe, through the indefatigable exertions of the late W. B. Rawson, Esq., of Nottingham. Since the present pastor, Rev. H. L. Adams, entered upon that office in October, 1834, God has revived his work in this place, and sent great prosperity. The spacious chapel, in the course of one year, became filled, and a large portion of the debt was paid off. The church rapidly increased, and the chapel, after two enlargements, will now seat fourteen hundred persons.

In a brief account published in 1840, Mr. Adams says: "We have flourishing Sabbath-schools; we have a 'Good Samaritan and Dorcas society' for relieving and clothing the sick poor; we have cottage lectures in the most destitute parts of our town weekly; we have two flourishing village congregations; we have Bible classes, and a 'Young Men's society' for special prayer and exposition of the Holy Scriptures." Thus has this chapel, at one time actually advertised for sale, been preserved and prospered to afford one of the most striking illustrations of the extensively beneficial influence of a church composed of "saints and faithful brethren," blessed with a laborious, devoted pastor.

In 1830, in order to extricate the chapel at Newark from difficulties, my father gave £100, and lent £1200, for several months, without receiving interest. In 1834, he gave toward the debt £289. The total amount contributed by him to this place was £664.

The following letter of acknowledgment for his repeated acts of liberality was forwarded to him in January, 1835, signed by the two deacons of the church:—

"DEAR SIR,

"We are favoured with your kind letter, inclosing a cheque for £289. 10*s.* 6*d.*, for which we desire to return you our united and grateful thanks. May you enjoy an increase of all spiritual blessings as a reward for your very generous, liberal, and repeated gifts to us as a church! You have done much for the cause of Christ at Newark, and we most sincerely acknowledge your kindness.

"Very few know the difficulties we have had to encounter. However, we trust, under the blessing of God, this place of worship will now be handed down to future generations."

CHAPTER XXI.

ASSISTANCE AFFORDED TOWARD THE PURCHASE OR BUILDING OF CHAPELS, IN BRISTOL, MANCHESTER, LEEDS, AND CHELTENHAM.

My father was deeply concerned for the extension of the cause of Christ in the large towns of England. He well knew that in them, those causes which, in many villages, and some smaller towns, oppose a formidable barrier to the progress of evangelical religion, in connexion with Protestant Nonconformity, do not exist, or operate but faintly and feebly. He much regretted that in the towns of large and rapidly increasing population, more frequent and vigorous efforts were not made by churches and individuals on the spot, to extend the Gospel, by multiplying churches; and whenever an opportunity of this kind arose, he was always ready to afford it his aid and encouragement, both in the way of advice and of pecuniary contribution.

In May, 1821, on the kind invitation of the late Rev. Samuel Lowell, he went to Bristol, for the purpose of obtaining new subscribers to Hoxton Academy, and met with great success. The friends at that place received him very kindly, and responded cheerfully and liberally to his appeal. The sum which he brought home, (including some donations,) was one hundred guineas. Just before he quitted Bristol, the friend at whose house he had been hospitably entertained, (I believe, the late H. O. Wills, Esq., of Portland square,) mentioned to him a chapel in Newfoundland street, erected for a class of persons attached to the tenets of the late William Huntingdon, who had preached at the opening. My father, after viewing the chapel, offered to take it for three months, that a trial might be made. This offer was accepted, and at the next vacation, Mr. Woolridge (already mentioned) was sent. He was supported by my father for three months, and after many discouragements, succeeded in raising a congregation. Friends at Bristol united to obtain a fund for purchasing the chapel, toward which my father gave £50. A Congregational church was formed, and Mr. W. ordained pastor, October 22, 1823, which office he continued to fill with considerable success, till he resigned it, for the purpose of labouring as a missionary in Jamaica. The chapel is vested in trustees for the Congregational denomination, and British schools were, in 1843, established in connexion with this place.

In the year 1824 George Hadfield, Esq. of Manchester, acting on my father's "strong recommendation," formed the design of erecting a chapel in the neighbourhood of his residence, and applied to my father in order to obtain the benefit of his knowledge and experience in chapel building. He was prompt and forward to encourage a proposal so exactly in accordance with his own views and sentiments. He had some years before endeavoured to strengthen the hands of a brother-in-law of Mr. Hadfield, the late William W. Walmsley, Esq. in the erection of the chapel at Salford, already mentioned.

The following are extracts from a letter to Mr. Hadfield, dated Sept. 16, 1824 :

"MY DEAR SIR,

"Your letter of the 11th inst. gave me pleasure, as I feel the importance of extending the Gospel in those parts of Manchester where it is evidently needed. Indeed, I think that those friends who have large families should feel peculiar interest in promoting new chapels near their residence.

"After what has been effected in Salford, I do not see any cause for discouragement. Any good thing may be accomplished in Manchester if properly set a-going, and vigorously pursued.

"If a chapel were built nearly square, wide enough and high enough for galleries, it might be enlarged afterwards, if necessary, at the back.

"For a Londoner to offer any pecuniary aid to the prosperous town of Manchester seems superfluous, but if it should be necessary by way of encouragement, I shall be willing to give £50. Your motto must be, 'Go forward.'"

He cheerfully offered the assistance of students from Hoxton to supply the pulpit of this new chapel, which was opened August 31, 1826. In a letter to Mr. Hadfield, dated April 26, 1828, he says, "I hope you will in due time be directed to a suitable person to fill the new chapel. You had better wait much longer than have one who will not answer the purpose." The worthy founder had not, however, to wait long—for a suitable person, Mr. James Griffin, one of the senior students at Hoxton, was shortly after sent, who proved every way suitable, and has, by the Divine blessing, accomplished the purpose—not only in filling the chapel with hearers, but also in gathering a large body of Christian disciples. Mr. Hadfield in a recent letter says, "The chapel is now cleared from all debt. There is a useful ministry exercised by a man of the highest worth and character—a church of nearly 350 members, a congregation of nearly 1000, a Sunday-school of 500 children, and a day-school of about 100 scholars."

My father obtained a good wife from Manchester, and he did much for that place by encouraging the erection of two large and respectable chapels. Truly did he say, "Any good thing may be accomplished in Manchester if properly set a-going and vigorously pursued." That saying has been verified to a considerable extent since it was penned by him; and I trust the Congregational Nonconformists in that important town, who have already "done virtuously," will, in the erection both of chapels and of school buildings, ere long excel not only others, but also themselves.

In the year 1827 my father received a letter from George Rawson, Esq., a public-spirited member of one of the Independent churches in Leeds, informing him that a chapel at that place (George street) was about to be sold, and expressing a decided opinion that its being retained for preaching was very desirable. The price at which it could be secured was £750; and my father generously offered, if the friends at Leeds would raise half that sum, (£375) he would give the other moiety. This proposal was accepted, the chapel was redeemed, and a congregation was raised, of which a student from Highbury College was ordained pastor.*

The town of Cheltenham, although its population had greatly increased, continued destitute of a regular congregational church—conducting its worship in the mode usually adopted in Independent chapels, till the year 1827, when my father provided a suitable place for that purpose.

A chapel had been built some years before by a lady for the Rev. Thomas Snow, (a clergyman who seceded from the Church of England,) at a cost of about £3500. After Mr. Snow returned to the bosom of the church it was purchased by the late Rev. Charles Simeon of Cambridge, who intended to re-open it as an episcopal chapel; but upon application successively to two bishops, each of them refused to consecrate it for that purpose. It was afterward put up to auction and sold for £1200. My father had been, I believe, more than once in treaty for this chapel, and offered for it the sum just named. Early in the year 1827 two or three friends in Cheltenham urged Rev. John Burder, then of Stroud, to re-purchase it, that it might be opened as an Independent chapel. The person to whom it then belonged offered to sell it for £1300, and the cost of needful repairs would be about £200 more. Mr. Burder thus writes: "Had our County Congregational Union been strong and active, I should of course have asked their help, or rather should have devolved the work on them. But as no assistance was to be expected from that quarter, as a matter of course I applied to your father, having before had occasion to make similar applications to him, and never without success. He readily sent me £1200 toward the sum required—without expecting any interest, and without requiring any security for the repayment of the principal. But for his generosity it is all but certain that the flourishing and useful church now worshipping in that place would not have existed.

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* Since the above was written I have received some additional particulars from Mr. Rawson, who, it appears, first proposed that my father should purchase this building, which was about to be sold for some low secular purpose, and offered to take a lease at £5 per cent. on the purchase-money. My father wrote by return of post, stating that "it would not answer, to have interest to pay as well as to support a minister," and therefore made the generous proposal above-stated. Besides the £350, an additional £100 was raised in Leeds for alterations. The chapel, which would seat about 600 persons, has been converted into school-rooms for the day-schools in connexion with the congregation under the charge of the Rev. John Ely, since the church which met in George street removed to Salem Chapel, where the church of which Mr. Ely is pastor met previously to the erection of their present elegant building on East Parade in 1841.

"The two circumstances of your father living at Highbury, and being Treasurer of Highbury College, made me think that to call it Highbury Chapel would be an appropriate although slight tribute of respect. When I first suggested this to him, he wished to decline the honour, but I told him that in such a matter he must allow me to have my own way; and accordingly the chapel bears that name. . . . Had there existed among the Nonconformists of England during the last fifty years twenty rich men, equally generous and public-spirited as Thomas Wilson, the whole face of the country, morally considered, would have been changed."

My father left the providing of ministers to supply the pulpit of this chapel entirely to Mr. Burder, who says: "I have much admired his leaving the choice of a minister entirely to others, and taking no pains even to introduce a student from his own favourite college."

In the year 1840 my father accepted £550, in full satisfaction for the amount advanced by him—thus giving to this place in fact £650, besides interest remitted. A vote of the church gathered in Highbury Chapel, expressing their grateful sense of this act of liberality, was transmitted to my father March 3, by the then pastor, Rev. Samuel Martin, (now of Westminster,) who says: "Eight candidates for communion were proposed at this meeting, and we have the prospect of a still farther increase. Last Lord's-day evening the chapel was crowded." Thus had he from time to time the pleasure of hearing and seeing that "his labour was not in vain in the Lord."

My father was not only liberal in his contributions to new chapels; he was also ready to assist in the liquidation of debts upon old ones: and in this respect he acted with his usual prudence and discretion. When on a visit to Coventry in 1814, understanding that the congregation at West Orchard Chapel (of which, in his younger days, he had for some time been a member) had been paying interest on £600, which had remained as an incumbrance on the place since Mr. Burder's removal in 1803, he offered to give £10 if the people would raise £90 within a year. His kind and judicious offer was accepted, and the result was, the removal of the whole debt in four years. Thus the way was cleared for a further advancement of the work in that place. In 1820 a new and larger chapel was built, towards which he contributed £20.

He also contributed £20 toward the rebuilding and enlargement of the chapel in Vicar lane.

When on a visit, in 1825, to a minister at Thame, in Oxfordshire,* to whom he had some years before sent £20 to be laid out in the purchase of books, he found the chapel in which that gentleman preached very small, and offered to give £100 if ground could be purchased, and a new chapel erected. This encouraging offer led to the accomplishment of the object.

To the account already given of Epsom† I may add the following particulars, since obtained from Rev. Dr. Harris, who was ordained pastor of the Congregational church there, in April, 1825. My father, in addition to the £50 given by him toward the extensive repairs of the chapel in the preceding year, *advanced* about £350. The late Rev. Joseph Johnson of Farnham kindly undertook to collect money in the county of Surrey towards this loan, but did not obtain a large sum. It was also arranged that an annual collection should be made at the chapel in liquidation of the balance. In reference to this Dr. Harris writes:

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* The late Rev. W. H. Wiffen.

† See pp. 227, 228, ante.

> "Of his liberal conduct relative to the latter sum, I had distinct cognizance; and still retain a very vivid recollection. Some months after my ordination, the first anniversary of the re-opening of the chapel was held, and considerable trouble it had given me to make the necessary arrangements. The collections amounted to about £20. Two or three days after, I called on him with the sum. He inquired whether I had not found it difficult to obtain ministers, &c. for the services. I recounted to him two or three of the disappointments I had encountered: on which he rejoined in an ordinary tone, 'Well, never mind the remainder of the debt.' This was said so quietly, that I was taken by surprise, and could hardly believe that I heard aright. I suppose my countenance indicated my doubt; for he laughed heartily, as if enjoying my mingled uncertainty and surprise, and rubbing his hands together as he often did, I believe, when amused, he added, 'Never mind the rest of the money; that is, do not hold any more anniversaries in order to get it. If any one should send a donation, well and good; but I shall never ask for any more of the debt.'

Of course, I was not a little delighted at his munificence. But it was the quiet, unostentatious manner in which he relinquished his claim on the sum, that most impressed me. And I believe, this was only in harmony with his general manner on such occasions—a fact to be accounted for, doubtless, on the ground that he acted under a calm sense of duty, and had made up his mind before-hand as to the course he should pursue."*

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* I have omitted to mention in an earlier chapter, that in 1805 my father gave £50 to encourage the building of an Independent chapel at Hastings, and subsequently advanced another £50, which was not repaid; and that in 1806 he gave a like sum to the chapel at Worthing, besides undertaking, in connexion with another gentleman, to provide supplies for the pulpit during one year. He also gave two sums of £20 and £50 to the English chapel at Hamburgh; the latter about 1823.

CHAPTER XXII.

BUILDING OF HIGHBURY COLLEGE—MY FATHER'S EFFORTS TO PROCURE THE REQUISITE FUNDS—HIS CONCERN IN THE SETTLEMENT AND REMOVAL OF MINISTERS—HIS DETERMINATION TO ENCOURAGE ONLY MEN OF COMPETENT ABILITIES FOR THE MINISTERIAL OFFICE, AND TO MAINTAIN THE UNSULLIED PURITY OF THE MINISTERIAL CHARACTER—HIS FRIENDLY ADVICE TO YOUNG PREACHERS.

AT the annual meeting of subscribers to Hoxton Academy, held June 29th, 1824, it was resolved, "That in the opinion of this meeting, it is expedient and highly important to the interests of the institution, that a new and commodious building be erected for the academy in the vicinity of the metropolis." The chief reasons for this determination were—the close, confined, and consequently unhealthy situation of the old college, which had become environed by small tenements, and the want of suitable provision for the domestic accommodation of the students.

The site ultimately fixed upon was near Highbury park, where four acres of freehold land were purchased for £2100, and presented, as a gift to the institution, by its treasurer.

The architectural design, selected from several, was one presented by John Davies, Esq., and the first stone of the new building was laid by my father, June 28, 1825, after which, an appropriate address was delivered to the numerous assembly collected on the occasion by Rev. George Clayton. The building was opened Sept. 5, 1826, when fervent prayers were offered by the late Rev. Thomas Morell, Dr. Pye Smith, and Rev. George Collison, and suitable addresses were delivered by Rev. Dr. Burder and the late Rev. Dr. Harris, which were afterwards published.

I may, with truth and justice, designate my father the *founder* of Highbury College, for, in addition to his own liberal donation, he was the chief agent employed in obtaining the contributions of others to a large amount. He waited personally upon many individuals, addressed more by letters, and took several journeys into various parts of the country to collect donations, besides making applications to ministers, for public collections. Without his powerful influence actively exerted, without his zealous efforts and indefatigable personal labours, this good work would, I believe, never have been accomplished; at least, the amount raised would have fallen very far short of the sum required.

The new collegiate building may be considered as, at once, the crowning act of my father's munificence, and his own best monument. He speaks of this handsome erection, in some of his letters, as a noble effort to advance and perpetuate a cause dear to his heart—the cause of evangelical nonconformity—which he regarded as identified with the cause of political freedom, for he considered the liberty of religious worship as the best bulwark and surest safeguard of the civil rights and political immunities of Britons. But the great purpose which he had in view was the purpose to which his whole previous life had been devoted—to help forward the Gospel of Christ, to advance the great work of evangelisation, and thus to promote the extension of his Redeemer's cause and kingdom. In a letter dated March, 1827, he says:—"Every person who has seen the building, highly approves of it. We expect to send out ten ministers annually, and will not one hundred ministers in ten years do much for the increase of Christ's kingdom?"

How zealously he devoted his time and energies to this work will appear from the following passage in a letter dated Oct. 21, 1826, from 53, Old Broad street, to which place he had some time before removed his two rooms of business, one occupied by himself, and the other by the college secretary, who acted also as his clerk.

"I am afraid you will think it long since you heard from me, but you will not be surprised, when I tell you that the completion of the new college building, and the furnishing of it, and commencement of house-keeping, together with soliciting donations and collections, have fully occupied my time; so much so that I could not be absent from home except for a few days all the summer. However, I have great reason to be thankful. I have now the pleasure of knowing that there are forty promising young men in the college, over whom we have obtained an excellent tutor,* and a suitable housekeeper. The result, I trust, will be, the increase of the Redeemer's kingdom.

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* Rev. Robert Halley, now Dr. Halley, of Manchester.

"We have lost several worthy elderly ministers of late, and what could be done without a succession of faithful labourers in the Lord's vineyard?"

A circular letter, dated January 12, 1827, was issued, signed by the treasurer, the tutors, and the members of the committee, containing an urgent appeal to ministers, for prompt and immediate aid, by a congregational collection on an early Lord's-day. They say:

"When we consider the depressed state of trade and commerce throughout our country, we are constrained most gratefully to acknowledge the goodness of God, in disposing so many of the friends of our institution to display a degree of liberality more than equal to our most sanguine expectations. More than £11,000 have been already received towards the expenses of the building. It is necessary, however, to raise an additional sum, of not less than £7000, in order to meet the remaining part of the expenditure."

My father was ready to go to any part of the country, where the minister and other friends were willing to receive him on this errand. In a letter dated Nov. 3, 1826, he says:

"I went to Braintree, last Friday evening. On Saturday and Sabbath, at Mr. Carter's, we got £87. 2*s.* 6*d.* for the college, and three new subscribers. On the 19th, Mr. Blackburn exchanges with Mr. Craig, [at Bocking] for the same object."

He thus writes to the late Rev. Thomas Hopkins, of Linton, in Cambridgeshire, February 1, 1829:

"You intimated that if I would visit Linton, your people would contribute. If you cannot accomplish it without my coming, I should be willing to do so, if life and health are continued. But could not another congregation be visited on the same Sabbath? I took, last year, Haverhill, Bumpstead, and Clare, all on one day. The object is very important."

While absent from home during the vacation of 1827, he did not lose sight of this object. July 28, he wrote to Rev. Mr. Hopkins, "If the second Sabbath in next month would suit for the collection at your place, for the erection of Highbury College, I will endeavour to be with you. Do you think you could prevail on any other minister in the neighbourhood to permit me to come on one part of the same Sabbath?—if so, this would be desirable."

In June, 1827, he went to Alfriston, in Sussex, on this errand, and obtained £28, of which £10 was from a clergyman in an adjoining parish. With this my father was highly gratified, as will appear by the following account from Rev. George Betts, then of Alfriston, now of March in Cambridgeshire:—"While in that part of our Lord's vineyard, I was honoured with two or three visits by your excellent father. The interest he excited by his kindness and condescension, and by preaching in the afternoon, was truly pleasing. One of the visits referred to was for the purpose of collecting for Highbury College; and a circumstance connected with that visit I must mention. A query was proposed, 'Shall we call upon Mr. C.?' (an excellent clergyman in the vicinity;) and well knowing the liberality and catholic spirit of that gentleman, I answered without hesitation in the affirmative. The journey of two miles was soon performed; and the object of Mr. Wilson's visit to that part of the country being stated to him, Mr. C. replied, 'I shall be happy to do something in so good a cause.' He at once put down two donations, himself £5, and Mrs. C. £5. You can imagine with what gratification and delight Mr. Wilson would return from that visit."

My father took pleasure in conducting ministers and other friends from the country who came to visit him, over the new building, either while the work was in progress, or shortly after its completion; and he sometimes *proposed*, in fine summer weather, to accompany his guests thither. He was led on such occasions to make remarks that were highly characteristic and striking, one of which has been preserved. A minister from the country was impressed at the time with the noble and Christian character of the sentiment which he expressed in these words: 'My wish is, that my happiness should consist in making others happy.' This was but the utterance of the predominant feeling of his heart, embodied in the whole course and tenor of his life, which showed that he understood the real secret of happiness, hidden, alas! from so large a portion of our race, who have yet to learn what that saying of the Lord Jesus meaneth, "It is more *blessed* to give than to receive."

My father was frequently consulted by ministers educated at Hoxton Academy as to their seeking other spheres of labour. He was opposed to frequent and hasty removals of ministers from one place to another; but when sufficient reason appeared to justify such a determination, he was ready to assist in providing another station of usefulness. In a letter to a minister dated July 8, 1826, he says: "I will venture to give an opinion which I formed some time ago, and which is now confirmed—that if another situation presented itself, it would be your duty to remove. I am against imprudent and unnecessary changes, but I have known instances of one removal in a minister's life being attended with good—both to himself and to the congregation."

When vacancies in the pastorate occurred, he was always ready, upon application being made to him, to recommend persons whom he considered suitable for the station, and he generally showed great sagacity and judgment in this matter. He did not restrict his recommendations to ministers educated at Hoxton or Highbury. Several valuable pastors from other colleges have been many years, and are still labouring honourably and usefully in stations to which he introduced them. In this very important and responsible work of recommending individuals to particular stations, although he had never acted with rashness and precipitation, yet he learned by experience some lessons of increased caution and more vigilant circumspection. The following are extracts from letters addressed to a minister in the country who had lately resigned his charge, but continued to reside in the same place:

"March 8, 1825.—I am determined never to recommend persons who are imprudent, bad tempered, of doubtful piety, or deficient in ability."

He then mentions a young man who had been admitted into Hoxton Academy, but whose health did not allow of close application to college studies, and adds:

"He is a pious, worthy young man, and I think very prudent and circumspect. If he exerts himself to improve his speaking, and labours in his study, I think he may suit."

In a letter dated April 13, 1825, speaking of the same person, he says:

"Your letter afforded me pleasure, inasmuch as your account of Mr. ——— justified my recommendation of him. I am inclined to hope that he may be a suitable person for ———, on account of his piety, unassuming behaviour, and good radical abilities. But I am constrained to think that little good will be effected by his preaching, unless he is fully determined to be more earnest, fervent, and importunate in speaking, and to illustrate his ideas in a plain, easy, familiar manner, bringing down his phraseology to suit his hearers. He should study human nature by conversing with persons of various characters in his walks and journeys, and read the most pious and searching divines. A minister must rouse the attention, and make striking appeals to the conscience—particularly showing what sin is, in the glass of the Divine law, and then urging men to flee for refuge to Christ. You may be very useful to him as a *tutor* and *father*, pointing out every defect, encouraging every improvement, directing his studies—

lending him books, &c. . . . . . If he continues to give satisfaction, and especially if the congregation increases, you may then encourage the church to give him an invitation. I hope as Mr. —— gains more confidence he will be more lively. Give him no rest till he makes the people *feel*."

"November 21, 1825.—I am glad to learn that Mr. —— has been invited to continue at ——. I have told him that I could not recommend him to be ordained until all the stated hearers have met and endeavoured to advance their subscriptions. The poorer part should pay weekly or monthly as much as they are able. Much depends on active collectors and good management."

The choice, however, it appears, did not terminate in a happy and permanent union, as the following extracts will show:

"August 3, 1826.—I regret the situation of chapel affairs at ———. Without conciliation and good temper no minister can succeed as a stated pastor."

"September 29, 1826.—I was very glad to find that my visit to —— produced the desired effect. I trust in due time union and peace will be restored. I do not wonder that you feel anxious about supplies, after what you have witnessed, but I hope by the blessing of God, and with much prudence, you will do well. It is not an easy matter for you to obtain a person who has been some years in the ministry. If they are valuable they do not move [from place to place].

"I shall always be cautious in future about recommending any person who has not passed honourably through an academy."

Although my father was always ready to assist young ministers—particularly those who had passed honourably through the college course at Hoxton or Highbury, he would never give the least sanction or encouragement to any individual concerning whom, in any important respect, he "stood in doubt," or whose moral character and conduct were not in his opinion unimpeachable. When charges were brought against any one, he was always forward to promote a full and searching inquiry, and sometimes took an active part in conducting a close and careful investigation. There were a few—and but a few—instances in which charges of this nature were substantiated, and in such cases he used every effort to induce such persons to resign an office of which they had proved themselves unworthy, or to procure their abandonment by the churches and congregations with which they had been connected.

In a letter dated October 5, 1827, to a minister in Cambridgeshire—in reference to a young man whom he had assisted, he says:

> "I write now on rather a delicate subject, but I consider it my duty. I am requested to inquire into the occasion of Mr. ——'s leaving ———. I know that these inquiries are of an unpleasant nature, but the truth should be ascertained, lest the cause of Christ be injured by those who are the leaders of the people. You may place confidence in me that I will not mention your name without your consent. Wishing you and yours every blessing, I remain," &c.

In a letter dated April 19, 1828, to Rev. John Blackburn, after detailing evidence which satisfied his own mind that a particular individual was not fit to be recognised and encouraged as "a Christian minister," he adds, "I wish I could think otherwise, but I must be faithful."*

Considering what our frail fallen nature is, no one can wonder that instances of this kind should occur—notwithstanding all the precautions that can be taken. That they are of a very rare occurrence among Protestant Dissenters is a fact to which the writer can, from his own knowledge, bear decided testimony.

I have heard my father express regret that churches in the country were sometimes precipitate in electing pastors, after a brief and slight acquaintance, without instituting particular inquiries from parties previously acquainted with them. While he recognised the right of individual churches freely to choose their own pastors, he thought that the greatest caution and deliberation were required in the exercise of that right, and deeply lamented that, in electing a spiritual guide to take the oversight of themselves and their families, as well as a preacher of the Gospel to their neighbours and friends—a church should manifest anything like heedless indiscretion.

He was deeply impressed with the conviction that all churches should be working churches, and all members working members—that, in fact, a church should resemble a hive of bees; that, instead of leaving useful operations to be carried on by the pastor and other officers, it is the duty of every individual member to be diligently employed for the advancement of the cause of God—"always abounding in the work of the Lord;" and that it is one great branch of the duty of ministers to stimulate the people under their charge to active and strenuous exertions, as well as to direct and superintend the operations carried on by the church. In a letter to Rev. Robert Littler dated January 10, 1825, he says, "Much is yet to be done; *all hands must be at work.* May the Lord pour out his Holy Spirit on all his ministers and churches!"

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* This related to a case in Kent which my father had fully investigated on the spot.

My father sometimes gave friendly hints to the younger ministers—especially those who had been educated at Hoxton and Highbury—who came at his request to preach at the chapels built by him in London. He says to one who had engaged to supply at Craven Chapel in 1827, "I hope you will select those subjects that are likely to do most good—well spiced with the glorious Gospel, and affectionately applied to the various circumstances of the congregation." To the same minister, some years after, he says, referring to a sermon which he had heard: "May I take the freedom of expressing an opinion, that if you had chosen a subject more full of Gospel truth, and had handled the passage in a more *textual* manner, I think your sermon would have been more generally acceptable and useful." To the same, when about to preach at a place where the tenets of the late William Huntingdon prevailed, he says: "I think you will agree with me that the most effectual way of counteracting those sentiments is, by a plain and full exhibition of the leading and essential doctrines of Christianity, with an affectionate application to the experience and conscience." Thus did he continue to inculcate the great lessons which he had early endeavoured to impress upon the minds of the young preachers over whom he watched.

The following communication from one of the oldest surviving students in Hoxton Academy (which might have been introduced much earlier) will illustrate my father's prompt and generous kindness to those who were in need of pecuniary help:

"Nearly fifty years since, a young man, under the sanction of his pastor, and the church with which he was united, applied for admission as a student to the seminary at Hoxton. His testimonials having been considered satisfactory, he was directed to repair to London, for the purpose of going through the usual examination previous to his admission into that college. His circumstances were somewhat peculiar, as his relative connexions, after strong opposition to his becoming a dissenting minister, altogether repudiated him, and left him to his own slender resources. After completing his journey in the most economical way possible, passing a whole night, when the nights were long and cold, on the outside of a stage coach, without diminishing his little means by going to the expense of any refreshment, he found himself, with something less than two pounds in his pocket, amidst a world of strange faces, and without a friend to whom he could look for aid. He was first introduced to the venerable Dr. (then Mr.) Simpson, who paused, lifted up his hands and eyes, and was evidently engaged in mental prayer. By him the youthful candidate was sent to

Mr. Wilson, in Wood street. He was received kindly, and informed that the committee for examination would meet him that evening at his, Mr. W.'s house in Artillery place. Thither he went, and having gone through the usual modes by which candidates are tried, there was very general satisfaction evinced. But one question remained to be proposed, of which the young man had not received the least previous intimation: 'Are you in possession of sufficient means for defraying incidental expenses for clothing, books, &c., or have you friends who will engage to provide what is requisite for these purposes?' To the candidate, who had just before been thinking of the slenderness of his resources, the question was startling, almost appalling. He had only to state the fact, which he did very briefly, and without entering into those explanatory circumstances, which might perhaps have awakened a feeling of sympathy. Though a long period has since intervened, he still remembers the silent, but readable expression of countenance, in the members of the committee, that followed. All his fondly cherished hopes were vanishing, like the cloud mistaken for land. At that moment, Mr. Wilson, who always followed with promptitude the impulse of benevolence, said, Mr. ——, you need not trouble yourself on that head. I will undertake to supply you with whatever you may want, while you are at the academy.' None but a person similarly circumstanced, can conceive of the feeling produced by such an occurrence; and though fifty years have since nearly elapsed, it is still retained in its freshness and power. While the grateful recollection will ever remain, it is pleasing to the individual to state, that, receiving aid from unexpected quarters, he was not burdensome to his generous friend and benefactor. He might have received largely and ungrudgingly from Mr. Wilson, but he felt it a principle of justice to husband his own means; and he is thankful to say that while the kindness to which he stands indebted, is worth more than mountains of prey—the sum actually received was two guineas."

I have intimated in a preceding page that *all* the money given by my father to poor students was not from his own purse, because I have occasionally found in the minutes of Hoxton Academy entries of sums reimbursed to the treasurer, which he had advanced in this way; but the preceding extract clearly shows that at the time referred to, no such practice existed as that which, at a subsequent period, was adopted, but which I apprehend did not long continue.

My father also afforded liberal aid to the preparatory instruction of many students who, not being sufficiently advanced in classical and general knowledge, were placed for some time under the care and instruction of a minister in the country. The expense of this was in many cases borne by him in part, and in some, wholly. The ministers who undertook this important service were Rev. William Hordle, of Harwich, the late Rev. John Thornton, of Billericay, Rev. Walter Scott, of Rowell, now President of Airedale College, Yorkshire, Rev. Alexander Stewart, of Barnet, Rev. John Jukes, of Yeovil (now of Bedford,) and occasionally others. The last-named gentleman writes: "Your father has paid me £140, and even £160 a-year, for the board and education of students who could not otherwise have entered the ministry, some of whom are now amongst the most promising and the most useful of our young ministers."

CHAPTER XXIII.

CHAPELS BUILT BY MY FATHER AT IPSWICH—NORTHAMPTON—RICHMOND, SURREY—FINCHLEY—OLD MEETING-HOUSE AT TUNBRIDGE RE-OPENED AND REPAIRED CHIEFLY AT HIS EXPENSE—EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.

My father's mind and heart were so large and expansive, that he could have no sympathy with those who regard one Congregational church in a large town with an increasing population, as the limit beyond which no effort should be made by members of the denomination to extend the kingdom of Christ in that place. On the contrary, he considered a second chapel—to become ere long the seat of a second church—very desirable; and so far was he from supposing that a new place would injure or weaken the old one, his opinion was—and the opinion was confirmed by repeated instances which occurred in his own experience—that it rather tended to confirm and establish the previously existing congregation.

He was not only ready at all times to contribute to new erections in such places, but was also led, under the guidance of Divine Providence, to undertake himself this great service for two large towns, which he thought required additional chapels.

About the year 1825 he purchased a small meeting-house in Dairy lane, Ipswich, from an aged minister to whom it belonged (the late Rev. Edward Davies). A student from Highbury College was settled as the minister of this place, and the congregation so much increased that additional accommodation was required. In 1828, my father being at Ipswich, observed an eligible piece of ground to be sold in the centre of the town (Nicholas street), which he purchased for £500, and erected, at his own sole expense, a neat chapel, forty-two feet by sixty, with commodious school-room, and a convenient vestry. The old meeting-house being taken by the builder at a valuation, the remaining cost was about £1500.

The new chapel was opened for public worship April 30, 1829. Since the present minister, Rev. John Whitby, settled at this place in 1831, the congregation has much increased. In 1833 a front gallery was erected, and two side galleries were added in 1841. It now affords accommodation for 900 persons. The galleries were erected at the cost of the congregation, who also purchased a burying-ground adjoining the chapel, and have altogether laid out nearly £900 in these additions. They have, also, erected a small chapel in the village of Burstall, at a cost of £200.

My father's attention had often been directed to the town of Northampton by the late Rev. Joseph

Johnson, of Farnham, who—being a native of that place—observed, during his occasional visits, how much its increasing population required an additional supply of spiritual instruction. About the year 1820 my father communicated by letter with Rev. John Morris, late of Olney, requesting that he would endeavour to obtain a room for commencing an attempt in some part of the town which might appear most destitute of religious privileges. It was not, however, till some years afterward that Mr. Morris, becoming more intimately acquainted with Northampton, and more deeply impressed with the conviction that it presented an ample field for additional efforts, the population being then estimated at 16,000—again introduced the subject to my father's notice. He requested that gentleman to find an eligible site on which he might erect a chapel. After many inquiries, a piece of ground—eighty-five feet in front and one hundred and thirty-two feet in depth—in Commercial street, at a considerable distance from other places of worship, was purchased for £600; and a neat respectable chapel—forty-two feet by sixty-two—was opened for public worship April 9, 1829. The total cost of the chapel was £2000, besides £100 expended in alterations. My father mentions in a letter that two of the Dissenting ministers in Northampton (Messrs. Grey and Hyatt) attended the morning service at the opening, and spoke afterward in a friendly manner. Galleries have since been erected and an additional school-room built at the expense of the congregation.

Since my father's decease a marble tablet has been erected in the porch with the following inscription:

"This Chapel was built A.D. 1829, at the sole expense of the late Thomas Wilson, Esq., of Highbury place, London.

"This tablet is erected in grateful commemoration of his liberality."

In the vacation of 1829 Mr. Edmund T. Prust, after completing his term of study at Highbury College, was sent to preach in this new chapel, and his services met with so much acceptance that he was requested to continue, and was encouraged to settle as pastor of a small church formed December 9, which has greatly increased, and of which he still continues the respected and beloved pastor. The following are extracts from letters written by my father to Mr. Prust:

"February 15, 1830.—I am glad that you are pleased with the printing of the sermon.* I hope it will do much good, while it reflects honour on the name of Doddridge.

"It affords me much satisfaction to learn that you are encouraged in your important work, and that you are making progress. I trust you will live near to God, and that a good portion of Whitefield's zeal may rest upon you. I ought to be thankful that all along the smile of Heaven has been afforded to this new interest. The unanimity expressed in your invitation to the pastoral office, I think makes the path of duty plain before you, and I am glad that your mind is inclined to accept it.

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* 'Christ's Invitation to Thirsty Souls. A Sermon preached at Northampton in 1729,' which my father reprinted.

"I rejoice that a Sunday school is about to be commenced in another part of the town."

"September 6th, 1831.—I hope this will find you in good health, and that the work of the Lord is prospering in your hands. . . . I am more than ever convinced that the ministry requires much labour in the study and entire devotedness, with a plain, faithful, affectionate statement of the grand truths of the Gospel in the pulpit."

"February 3, 1835.—I trust you are much encouraged in your work in the conversion of sinners and the edification of believers.

"You will have heard of the death of Dr. Morrison [of China]. How important is it to encourage a rising ministry! He has left a son—very promising, and likely to have his [father's] station in Canton.

"We live in eventful times. All should aim to promote the Gospel of Christ, and the religious education of the rising generation."

"April 9, 1836.—The College at Highbury goes on well. Upwards of twenty students were preaching last Sabbath, which is an unusual number. Good ministers are much needed.

"At Coventry the congregations have had united prayer meetings. This has been attended with a revival of religion. Converts are numerous—especially among the young.

[After referring to some young ministers who wished to remove] "We now find that, unless ministers study closely, and are entirely devoted to their work, they cannot succeed in the present day of general improvement. Our ministers must have superior qualifications to those who were sent out thirty years ago."

The populous village of Richmond, in Surrey, not having any regular Independent congregation, my father was induced, in the year 1830, to purchase a piece of freehold ground for £500, and to erect at his own expense a very neat chapel, fifty feet by thirty-five, with vestry and school-room on one side twelve feet in width, the latter communicating (by the removal of sliding shutters) with the chapel.* The total expense of this building was upwards of £2000. It was opened for public worship July 21; a Congregational church was formed December 21, consisting of nine members—of which the late Rev. H. B. Martin (chosen in March, 1835) continued pastor till his death, March 2, 1844, and which, on the election of his successor, Rev. Evan Davies, the present pastor, consisted of seventy members, and is now increased to eighty.

At Finchley, a village about six miles from London, an old and incommodious building had been hired and fitted up for preaching by the London Itinerant Society. After some years, several gentlemen residing at that place were desirous that a respectable chapel should be erected, and applied to my father for advice and assistance. He encouraged them to proceed—purchased a piece of freehold ground for £100, which he presented, and on which a neat chapel was built in 1830. He afterwards purchased for £80 a piece of ground at the back of the chapel, on which an infant school-room has since been erected. The new building, undertaken by my father, cost about £1000, toward which about £420 were contributed by members of the congregation and other friends. A considerable sum (I believe £360) was also paid by parties connected with the old building—so that he contributed altogether about £400. The first pastor of the church at Finchley was Rev. John Watson, now tutor of the Academy at Newport Pagnel, who, in 1843, was succeeded by the present pastor, Rev. G. R. Birch. The chapel is about to be enlarged, chiefly for the purpose of providing an increased number of free sittings for the poor.

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* Having spoken in rather disparaging terms of the architectural character of my father's *London* chapels, it may be proper to state that this and the other chapels built by him *in the country*, since the year 1828, are distinguished for neatness and even simple elegance. An engraving of the front elevation, longitudinal and transverse sections, and ground plan of the Richmond chapel, which is built in the Norman style, accompanied by explanations and judicious remarks, appeared in the Congregational Magazine for February, 1833, pp. 65—71. The architect of this, and most of the other chapels above referred to, was John Davies, Esq., whose plans for Highbury College were adopted by the committee.

The Presbyterian meeting-house on Mount Sion, Tunbridge Wells, was erected in the year 1720, and the congregation which frequented it for several years was numerous, but gradually decreased, till at length, in 1814, the chapel, being almost deserted, was finally closed. In the spring of 1830 it attracted the notice of the individual who will be known to posterity as the builder and repairer of houses of God in this land. My father's attention was first directed to this building by his brother-in-law, Samuel Mills, Esq., who generously offered to give £50 towards its repair.

This encouraged him to undertake the good work of rescuing the chapel from the state of dilapidation and decay in which it had been suffered to remain for many years. Having made an arrangement with the trustees, he gave orders for its being thoroughly repaired, and enlarged by the erection of a gallery, and a school-room communicating with the chapel. One of the trustees, the late John Rogers, Esq., of Streatham, contributed £21, and Thomas Thompson, Esq., now of Poundsford park, £21. My father's name appeared as a subscriber of £100, but his contribution was, in fact, little short of £600.

The chapel was re-opened July 8, 1830. A Congregational church was formed December 10, and in January following Mr. Benjamin Slight, a student in Highbury College, was invited to become its pastor. To this office he was ordained May 10, 1831, and has since continued to discharge its duties with much acceptance and success.

The following passages of letters addressed to Mr. Slight will furnish additional evidence of my father's earnest desire that the young ministers from Highbury College should diligently employ all means for "winning souls," and even "be made all things to all men, that they might by all means save some."

"July 23, 1830.—The attendance at the chapel is encouraging. You must look upon Tunbridge Wells as a missionary station, for there is much to be done in various ways. . . . . After you have been two months, you will be able to see the path of duty as to continuance. I am inclined to think it is exactly the station for you to occupy."

"September 3, 1830.—I hope you are the person designed by the Lord to do much good at Tunbridge Wells. There are always difficulties in new congregations, but they are surmounted by patient perseverance. . . . Inclosed in the parcel are some tracts and books for lending, or towards forming a vestry library. I have sent a tract entitled 'The Good Old Way,' and one on the Sabbath, and a 'Persuasive to Public Worship,' that you may consider whether it would be desirable for you to mention that you would preach on the importance of the observance of the Sabbath, and that tracts on that subject would be given at the doors at the close of the service. Another sermon might be on the leading doctrines of the Bible, showing the general accordance with them, of the doctrinal Articles of the Church of England; after which, the tract entitled 'The Good Old Way' might be given. Another subject might be regeneration, and a tract on that subject given. If you approve of this plan I will send a sufficient number of the tracts.

"Let me recommend you to bring the grand essential truth constantly forward in new forms and illustrations, and affectionately apply all to the conscience. Wishing you much success, I remain," &c.

"November 27, 1830.—Your letter of the 23rd gave me much pleasure—especially to learn that the Lord had given you some evidence of His presence and blessing. *The conversion of sinners is the most important matter in the world,* and this should always be the anxious desire and aim of all the ambassadors of Christ. I am afraid vital religion is at a low ebb, both among ministers and people. . . . . I am more than ever convinced that every sermon must have a decidedly evangelical stamp; and that an affectionate and close application of Divine truth to the conscience is necessary, or the people will go away from the house of God just as uninformed [unimpressed] and as cold as they entered. A minister must give his heart and soul to the work, and live very near to God in prayer.

"I suppose you admit members [into the church] after suitable conversation and inquiry into character. . . . . All pious persons, whether of the Establishment or otherwise, should be admitted to the Lord's table as occasional communicants. Would it not be a good plan for you to give notice of preaching a sermon to the children of the Sunday-school on the afternoon [of a Lord's-day mentioned,] and invite their parents and others to attend?

"I think you do right to petition against Slavery."

"January 26, 1831.—I rejoice that you have had some instances of usefulness. You must look upon this as the first-fruits of a glorious harvest. Expect much from Him who says, 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.'"

"April 12, 1833.—It affords me great pleasure to learn that you are going on prosperously. I trust you will be enabled to live near to God, and to watch and pray that you enter not into temptation; for Satan levels his darts much at young ministers.

"Last night our venerable father, Rev. Rowland Hill, entered into his heavenly rest. 'Our fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?'"

The following are portions of letters addressed by my father to a lady at Tunbridge Wells, who had derived spiritual benefit from the Gospel preached at this chapel, as well as several members of her family:

"February 23, 1835.—I am glad that you have a prospect of success in the school. The teacher, I hope, will suit. We live in eventful times. There is a struggle between light and darkness, truth and error, justice and injustice; but the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!

"The religious world have sustained a great loss in the death of J. B. Wilson.* May the Lord raise up others, who shall devise liberal things!"

"October 2, 1835.—I am delighted that your school goes on well, and especially that the Duchess of Kent has given a donation. Her liberality is a token for good. . . . I congratulate you on being the foundress of the school."

"March 28, 1836.—I was gratified by the receipt of your letter of the 22nd instant. I shall always feel interested in the success of the cause on Mount Zion. That so many of your family should have been brought into the fold of the Redeemer is wonderful, and calls for thanksgiving to the God of all grace. I rejoice with you in the promising appearances in ——. I trust time will prove that he has experienced a saving change. If so, it will be seen in his exemplifying the meekness, devotion, and benevolence of the Saviour. Should it be the will of God that he should devote himself to the Gospel ministry, it will, in my view, be an honour conferred on your family. I am glad to learn that —— will soon be received into the church of God. Little did I think when the chapel was opened that such a harvest would be reaped in one family. One convert to Christ in a family has often been the means of attracting others. David says, in the 40th Psalm, 'Many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.'

"The freedom of our worship, and the liberty we have of choosing our own ministers, are the glory of our denomination.

"I attended the ordination of Mr. Connebee at Dorking last Wednesday. Last year a new handsome chapel was built there, which is now filled every Sabbath evening. This has set the church-going people to pull down the old church, and to erect a new and larger one. All this produces more general attention to divine things, promotes the education of children, and has a moral influence on the nation. We live at a time when 'whatever is loose must be shaken, whatever is corrupted must be lopped away, whatever is not built on the broad basis of public utility, must be thrown to the ground. What, some centuries ago, it was daring but to think, and dangerous to express, is now realised, and carried into effect.'

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* John Broadley Wilson, Esq., of Clapham.

"It would be very desirable to have a boys'-school connected with the chapel. Mr. Slight might consult Mr. Dunn, the secretary of the British and Foreign School Society."

"October 22, 1836. . . . I feel at times some of the infirmities of age, and find I cannot do what I formerly did. I ought to be thankful that I have been spared so long, and that I have seen a great increase of the Redeemer's kingdom. You would be gratified to see and hear the two native Africans, brought over to this country by Dr. Philip. They are intelligent and pious; and the Hottentot's eloquence and animation might put to shame many of our heavy preachers.

"I am gratified with the prosperity of the cause at Mount Zion, and hope your esteemed pastor will long be spared, and be increasingly useful.

"I hope —— will grow in humility, learning of Christ, who was meek and lowly in heart; and I trust in due time he will be received into the church, and be directed afterwards how he may most glorify God."

"January 16, 1837.—We have heard with deep concern of the great loss you have sustained, and I cannot help sending a few lines of sympathy and condolence. You must keenly feel this afflicting dispensation, yet you know where to look for support, and I trust you can say with Job, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.'

"What continual proofs we have that we are pilgrims and strangers upon earth; and yet how difficult it is to set our affections on things above, and to realise what the apostle meant when he said, 'The life that I live in the flesh I live by faith on the Son of God!' I have no doubt that this affecting event will have a sanctifying influence on all the family. The Lord has done great things for you, and you have cause to rejoice that many of your dear children have chosen that good part which shall never be taken from them. I hope —— will be more than ever devoted to God, and adorn the doctrine of God his Saviour in all things.

"I took a part at the commencement of the Missionary, Tract, and Bible Societies, and have been spared to see the wonderful results, as well as the increase of the Redeemer's kingdom by the labours of young ministers from the college, in which I have been actively engaged forty-three years. 'Not unto me, not unto me, O Lord, but unto thy name, be all the glory.'

"I have great occasion for thankfulness, when I consider that Mrs. W. and I have been spared together nearly forty-six years. We feel that our time is now short. May the Lord enable us to grow in grace, to endure to the end, and to say with truth, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, and not for me only, but also for all those who love his appearing.'

"Mrs. W. joins me in affectionate remembrance and best wishes for you, and every member of your family."

In the year 1842 my father spent some weeks at Tunbridge Wells, and had the pleasure of seeing the congregation in a flourishing state. He also received an elegantly bound copy of 'The Illustrated Family Bible,' published by Fisher, Son, & Co. in 1840, including the notes and marginal references of Rev. John Brown, and a Concordance by Rev. G. K. Hannay. This large and handsome folio volume was presented to him with the following inscription:

"To Thomas Wilson, Esq., whose liberality and kindness in the refitting and re-opening of Mount Sion Chapel, Tunbridge Wells, in the year 1830, after it had been closed upwards of fifteen years, has laid the church and congregation under deep and lasting obligations; this copy of the Holy Scriptures is by them presented as a token of grateful remembrance and affectionate esteem, through the medium of the Rev. Benjamin Slight, their pastor now for twelve years; accompanied with the warmest desire and prayer, that its divine and sacred contents may be increasingly the solace and support of his mind, as well as of that of his venerable and beloved partner in life, in their declining days; and that at length they may conclude a long and useful career on earth, in the full assurance and unclouded prospect of a blessed immortality in heaven.

"*Tunbridge Wells*, 22 *August*, 1842."

This testimony of respect and tribute of gratitude was very pleasing to my father, as well as the kindness which he received from friends at this place during his visit.

The situation of the old chapel being inconvenient of access, and in other respects unsuitable, highly eligible ground has been purchased, on which a larger chapel has recently been commenced.

The reader will not fail to observe in how remarkable a manner God was pleased to honour his faithful servant by conferring upon him the privilege of *seeing* the fruit of his labours. It might be said with almost literal truth, "God blessed him in all his works and in all that he put his hand unto; the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand; all that came into his heart to do for the house of the Lord," by the blessing of God, "he prosperously effected." What he did, was done *faithfully* and *heartily*, "as unto the Lord, and not unto men." He sought the Lord and strengthened his hand in God, and the Lord was with him and made that which he did to prosper. His eye was single, and being conscious of a sincere intention to glorify God, he expected success; and that gracious promise was fulfilled to him, "Them that honour me, I will honour." He acted upon the maxim of the devoted missionary Dr. Carey, "Expect great things, and attempt great things;" and by the help of his God he accomplished great things.*

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* In a letter to a minister dated May 27, 1814, he says, "Expect great things, and aim at them."

CHAPTER XXIV.

MY FATHER'S ZEAL FOR ORTHODOXY—CONCERN IN LADY HEWLEY'S CHARITY SUIT—CONNEXION WITH THE LONDON UNIVERSITY—PARLIAMENTARY REFORM BILL—CONGREGATIONAL LIBRARY — LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY, ETC.

My father's zealous regard for doctrinal truth has already appeared. He was prepared to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." He had seen the desolations which a modified Arianism, leading on by stealthy steps to that ultra-Socinianism, called by modern courtesy, Unitarianism, had produced in the Nonconformist churches, and he had the authority of an eminent individual, not himself altogether free from the charge of heterodoxy, for ascribing the most baneful effects to that destructive heresy. The late Dr. Abraham Rees, in one of those personal interviews which my father had with him, described himself as occupying a middle position—although leaning rather to the orthodox side, and denounced Socinianism as "the ruin of the Dissenting interest."

My father, who had seen this remarkable saying verified in too many instances, could not regard the proscribed doctrine with any other feelings than those of strong antipathy and aversion. He too well knew what destructive effects had been wrought by that withering blight, which had converted many a blooming and fruitful spot into barrenness; and it had been his privilege to recover and reclaim some of these waste places—the desolations of many generations.

In February, 1818, a meeting was held at the King's Head Tavern in the Poultry, for the purpose of forming a society for the relief of aged and infirm Dissenting ministers, which it was proposed should comprehend all those belonging to the three generally recognised denominations—Presbyterian, Congregational, and Baptist. That meeting my father attended, and in the speech which he delivered on the occasion, assigned the reason why he could not concur in the proposal, that the society should include ministers of Unitarian opinions; inasmuch as, being intended exclusively for the relief of persons who had filled the ministerial office, that circumstance would in his judgment involve a recognition of public teachers of Unitarian doctrine as *Christian ministers*, which he could not admit those to be, who denied any essential doctrine of the Christian religion. He did not lay the stress of his argument on the peculiar position occupied in the system of Christianity by the doctrine of the Trinity, as forming the very basis on which the whole scheme of Christian doctrine rests; but took lower ground, and expressed his firm conviction of the absolute necessity of a lively faith in the vicarious atonement for sin made by the death of Christ, boldly stating, in the face of some eminent Unitarian ministers who were present, that he could not acknowledge, or in any manner assist in the support and encouragement, as professed teachers of the Christian doctrine, of those who deny the great propitiatory sacrifice of the Son of God. Some may regard this as the result of bigotry and intolerance; but if his view as to the implied recognition of these persons in their ministerial capacity was correct, it would seem to be in strict accordance with repeated apostolical injunctions.

Such being my father's sentiments in regard to Unitarianism, although accompanied with no unkind personal feelings towards Unitarians, the reader will not be surprised to learn that, when proposals were made to him by some gentlemen in Lancashire and Yorkshire, he readily consented to become one of the parties to an information then about to be filed in the Court of Chancery against the trustees of a valuable and extensive charity, founded by Dame Sarah Hewley, chiefly for the benefit of "poor and godly preachers of Christ's holy Gospel." The ground of this appeal to a court of equity was, that the trustees, being Unitarians, had distributed a large portion of the charity among ministers entertaining, professing, and preaching Unitarian opinions—such opinions being directly contrary to those views of the nature of Christ's holy Gospel which were entertained by the foundress in common with that body of orthodox English Presbyterians to which there was reason to believe that she belonged.

The original information, in which my father's name stands first among the relators, was exhibited June 18, 1830. The cause was heard before the Vice-Chancellor of England, Sir Lancelot Shadwell. His well-known decree—that Unitarians are not entitled to participate in the charity—was delivered December 23, 1833. An appeal from this decree was made to the Lord Chancellor. The luminous and eloquent judgment of Lord Lyndhurst, affirming the decree of the Vice-Chancellor, was delivered February 5, 1836. That judgment my father heard with admiration, and he considered the decision as the triumph of a righteous cause.

An appeal subsequently made to the House of Lords—the highest judicial tribunal in the land—was argued at great length in the summer of 1839, and an order made, dismissing the appeal with costs, dated August 5, 1842. My father, who was then in the country, writes, August 9: "I had a letter on Saturday, announcing the good news on Lady Hewley's charity. I understand the Unitarians regard us as persecutors, but I am sure we have only required justice; and if Lady Hewley could now speak, she would thank us."

The relators, however, were not permitted to enjoy the fruits of their victory. Two new sets of claimants had arisen in certain Scotch Presbyterian ministers in the northern English counties connected with the kirk of Scotland, and the United Secession church, who made a resolute attempt to appropriate the whole benefit of Lady Hewley's charities to ministers and members of their own churches. As this matter is not yet finally decided, I shall merely take leave to express my conviction, founded on some knowledge of the history, principles, and opinions of the English Presbyterian Nonconformists at the time when these charities were founded, that the modern Congregational Dissenters are their true, proper, and legitimate representatives, although I must entirely disclaim—on the part of my father and the other relators—any wish or intention to restrict the participation of the funds, to ministers and other persons belonging to that denomination.

Although my father's own advantages of education in his early life had not been of a superior kind, yet he was neither insensible to the value and importance, nor indifferent to the more extensive diffusion of literature, science, and general knowledge.

Of this he gave a decisive proof in May, 1825, when he complied with an earnest request to attend a meeting to be held at the chambers of Henry Brougham, Esq. (now Lord Brougham) in Lincoln's Inn, for the purpose of considering a plan for a Metropolitan University. One of the other persons present was the late Rev. Edward Irving. I have often heard him refer to the solemn tones of protest in which that gentleman uttered his denunciation of the attempt to establish an university without a theological faculty. My father did not sympathise with that objection. He considered the proposed arrangement of giving instruction during a portion of the day—and that not commenced at an early hour of the morning—a sufficient reason for dispensing with all religious worship in connexion with the college exercises.

He had the honour to be chosen a member of the first council appointed at a meeting of proprietors held December 19, 1825. He attended the meetings of council with much regularity till February, 1837, when he retired; and the vacancy thus created was supplied by the election of his nephew, John Remington Mills, Esq. My father was present at the ceremony of laying the first stone of the University building, April 30, 1827, by the late Duke of Sussex. On that occasion Lord Brougham, who was standing near him, made a remark, addressed to him, on the singularity of the circumstance that the resolution for the preparing of a suitable prayer to be offered on the ground should have been moved in the council by a Roman Catholic (the late Duke of Norfolk,) and seconded by a Protestant Dissenter—meaning my father himself.

But although he acquiesced in the propriety of excluding all theological lectures, or direct religious teaching from this University, yet he felt desirous of obtaining the services, as professors, of individuals well known for stedfast attachment to Christianity, as well as of eminent attainments in literature and science.

In a letter to Rev. Wm. Lothian, of St. Andrew's, dated March 26, 1827, he says:

> "As you are acquainted with the Rev. Dr. Chalmers, I take this opportunity to request you to present my best respects to him; and to say that nothing will delight me and many more, so much as to have his valuable services as a professor in the London University. I have the honour to be one of the council. The foundation-stone is to be laid by the Duke of Sussex on the 27th of April. I am fully satisfied that this is one of the most important schemes that ever could be attempted for the metropolis.
>
> "All wish it to be conducted upon the best Christian principles; but we have no theological chair, because it professes only to give day-instruction. Each pupil will live under the eye and care of his parent or guardian. Had we attempted divinity, we should have had nothing but the form, and most likely should have quarrelled about that."

My father was a holder of shares in this University; and in 1830 he purchased, for one hundred guineas, a cabinet of shells, fossils, and minerals, which had belonged to the celebrated Linnæus, and presented it to the institution.

My father had been from his youth a strenuous advocate for a thorough and effective, yet constitutional reform in the representation of the people. His earnest desire was, that the admirable theory of the British constitution should be carried into practical operation—that the House of Commons, being freely elected by the people, might fairly and fully represent their real opinions, sentiments, and wishes—and be, in fact, what it professes to be—the regular and constitutional organ for the expression and utterance of the national will.

When the great measure of Parliamentary Reform, prepared by the administration of the late Earl Grey, was introduced by Lord John Russell, my father hailed it as the propitious omen of a most favourable political change; and when application was made to him to preside at a public meeting in the parish of Islington, called for the purpose of expressing a determination to support that measure, he readily consented. This meeting was held March 14, 1831, at Canonbury Tavern. Other meetings for the same or similar purposes, were afterwards held, at which he also presided. At one of these meetings he commenced his address with these words: "The independence and purity of the House of Commons are the column [foundation] on which the whole fabric of our liberties rests;" and concluded with the following excellent advice to the assembly: "Be patient, be peaceable, be strictly obedient to the laws."

He was permitted speedily to see this momentous object gained. The bill received the royal assent on the 7th June, 1832; and the long-cherished desires of the friends of constitutional reform were at length accomplished, although not without some serious deductions and abatements. My father regarded this as a great achievement for the liberties of his country, and no one more heartily rejoiced in the result than he did.

In the same month, applications were made to him by influential individuals resident in the newly-created borough of Finsbury, inquiring whether he would allow himself to be put in nomination as a candidate for that borough at the then approaching election. In acknowledging the receipt of one of these letters, (from the late Joseph Travers, Esq.,) he assured the writer that he felt greatly honoured by the proposal, and rejoiced in every opportunity afforded to him of supporting just and liberal principles; but he added—"There is one insurmountable difficulty which obliges me to decline any farther consideration of the subject, viz., my advancing years, which must incapacitate me from discharging so important a trust in that vigorous and effective manner which the present state of the nation requires." Had it not been for this circumstance, I believe he would have very seriously entertained the proposal.

In May, 1831, my father gave £25 to a society formed in London in the year 1829, for the Diffusion of Ecclesiastical Knowledge, by the publication of cheap tracts. He occupied the chair at its annual meeting this year, and spoke freely and plainly in reference to a point on which he felt strongly and warmly—the deplorable and practically mischievous errors, as they appeared to him, in the constitution and ritual of the Church of England. Other speakers followed, whose tone and language might not be distinguished for mildness and moderation. The speeches were reported (perhaps not very accurately) in a weekly newspaper, which at that time professed to represent the general sentiment among orthodox Dissenters, and they were severely animadverted upon by the editor of another weekly newspaper, professing to represent the evangelical church party.

A gentleman at Reigate, who—although himself a member of the Church of England—had shown a disposition to countenance the chapel which my father had built there, addressed to him a kind and respectful letter dated June 21, 1831, in which the writer refers to the effect produced on his mind by reading the account of this meeting, from which he was led to infer that the object of the Society, and of Dissenters generally, was "the stirring up of a spirit of extermination against the Church of England"—although he acknowledged that "lamentable abuses existed in that establishment." The following is a copy of my father's answer to that letter:

"Dear Sir,

"I am very sorry that your mind has been prejudiced in consequence of my taking the chair at the meeting of the Ecclesiastical Knowledge Society; but I am obliged by your freely stating your feelings, as it affords me an opportunity of explanation. I take no part in the management of that society, but I know the conductors of it to be respectable ministers, and gentlemen of evangelical sentiments; and I believe the sole object they have in view is to diffuse information concerning the principles on which nonconformity can be justified. Certainly it is no part of their design to subvert or injure the Established Church. The chairman at a public meeting cannot be accountable for every thing that is said, and I am willing to admit that, by some of the speakers, in the warmth of the moment, too strong expressions might be used.

"You admit that 'lamentable abuses' exist in the establishment; so far, therefore, you are agreed with the speakers at the meeting, who could scarcely describe those abuses in stronger terms than are to be found in various publications even of clergymen. But if, as you intimate, an inference can fairly be drawn from the speeches then delivered, that the design of dissenters in establishing separate congregations, and in erecting chapels, is the extermination of the Established Church, let me assure you that you are greatly mistaken, and have (unintentionally no doubt) misinterpreted the meaning of the persons who delivered their sentiments on that occasion.

"I can say for myself, with perfect sincerity, and I believe the same may be said with truth of others, that the chief and indeed the sole, ultimate end for which such sanctuaries are raised, is the conversion of sinners, and the edification of believers by the faithful preaching of the Gospel. Had there been such preaching in the parish church at Reigate, I can positively say that no new chapel would have been erected there by me.

"If the Gospel of Christ has had any influence on my heart, it has taught me that the great object for which we live, is to promote the glory of God and the salvation of our fellow-creatures, and that all modes of worship, and distinctions of sects and parties, are less than nothing, compared with these.

"I heard Dr. Chalmers say, when preaching last year, at the opening of a new chapel, built by an inhabitant of Bristol,* that he considered the dissenters had been the means of purifying and strengthening the Church of England. I believe this to be true, and I hope the time will come, when all who love the Saviour, will unite heart and hand in promoting His kingdom in the world.

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* The late John Hare, Esq., of Firfield House, near Bristol, who erected at his own expense, a large, handsome, and commodious chapel. on freehold ground, in Bedminster, a populous suburb of that city. It was opened June 15, 1830.

"With sincere respect, I remain," &c.

In February, 1830, a letter was inserted in the Congregational Magazine, directing the attention of its readers to the houseless condition of the Congregational body, and to the advantages which would result from providing for it a local habitation and a home in the metropolis. This appeal attracted the notice of other individuals, and in a few months an attempt was made to carry the proposal into effect. My father was one of those who were quick to discern the importance, and prompt to offer aid for the accomplishment of a scheme, the value of which some who were ready to contribute to objects directly religious did not at once perceive.* He promised to give £1000, provided the sum of £10,000 could be raised. A meeting took place June 20, 1830, at which difficulties were started as to the possibility of obtaining so large a sum, and that attempt was consequently abandoned; but the persons who had called the meeting were not deterred from prosecuting the design. My father, although released from his conditional offer, contributed £500, and several sums of one hundred, fifty, and twenty-five guineas were obtained. The lease of a building of recent erection, in Blomfield street, Finsbury circus, was taken; and a spacious, lofty, and elegant room, originally intended as a music-hall, was fitted up as a library.

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* One of the purposes originally contemplated, which my father considered important, was the providing a place of secure deposit for the trust-deeds of chapels. He had long before expressed a strong opinion of the need of some provision of this kind. See p. 265, ante.

This building, called the Congregational Library, was opened May 9, 1831, when a meeting was held, of which my father was chairman. Although far from being at the time commensurate with the intentions and desires of its founders, and now become altogether inadequate to the wants of a numerous and increasing denomination, at length rousing itself to strenuous and united exertion, it has been productive of various beneficial results.

A more spacious and appropriate erection, containing all needful apartments and offices, and affording all requisite accommodation for meetings of committees, and for the permanent occupation of the secretaries and clerks of our various denominational institutions, is now urgently demanded.*

Having taken some interest, and had some concern from the first, in the management of this institution, I may be permitted briefly to express my own idea of what we really *need* for practically important purposes.

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* So long since as 1841, an address was presented to the Committee of the Congregational Union, from the Association of Congregational Ministers and Churches in Staffordshire, "on the importance of obtaining much more spacious premises for the annual meeting in London." See Congregational Magazine, p. 805. That meeting has for several years past been held in Crosby Hall, formerly occupied by a congregation of Nonconformists as a place of religious worship.

A new building in a central and convenient situation, on freehold ground (if possible)—containing—1. A lofty basement story—the ceiling being several feet above the ground, appropriated to culinary offices and refreshment rooms. This department, which, although much inferior, I consider important on various accounts, would find its appropriate place in the *lower* part of the building, and must not be suffered again to intrude into the higher region. To convert a *library* into a *refectory*, is a desecration of what ought to be held sacred to purposes exclusively intellectual, moral, and spiritual.

2. A ground floor, divided into convenient offices for the secretaries of our chief societies, their clerks and assistants, with a large and smaller committee rooms.

3. A superior story, containing a lecture room, suitably fitted up for an audience, and a large apartment appropriated as a library, in which public meetings might also be held.

Such a building might probably be erected for a sum not much exceeding £10,000, which could *now* surely be raised without difficulty by 500 shares of £20 each, not bearing interest, but entitling the subscribers to certain privileges.*

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* Other purposes highly *desirable*, although not absolutely requisite, might also be greatly promoted by such an erection. It would be the appropriate seat of a Literary and Historical Association, formed for the encouragement of ecclesiastical and biblical literature, by lectures, classes, &c., as well as for the cultivation of a more general and extensive acquaintance with our denominational history, and antiquities. A depository for the sale of our own publications, and a 'Clarendon press' for printing standard theological works, either in a handsome style, or in a cheap form, might be connected with the building. The profits derived from the rent of rooms, &c., might furnish the means of providing a salary for a librarian, who might be usefully employed in superintending and directing the affairs of the literary institute, editing publications, &c. At some future time scholarships might also be attached, the parties holding them rendering specified services. Thus the institution would be self-supporting, as well as available for a variety of useful purposes.

At the general meeting of the London Missionary Society in May, 1832, my father was chosen the treasurer of that important institution. He had been one of the directors from the formation of the Society; and at meetings of the board, which he generally attended, spoke occasionally in his own terse and pointed manner, and was always listened to with attention, and in later years with respectful deference. He showed his perspicacity and sound practical wisdom in the views which he took of measures most conducive to the real interests of the society. Many years ago, while the late Rev. William Orme filled the office of foreign secretary,* he urged upon his brother directors the importance of consolidation. He then thought that the Society was in danger of dissipating its strength by the multiplication of stations, instead of concentrating its forces by the selection of the most suitable places, and increasing the number of agents at those places. A more general conviction now prevails as to the wisdom of this mode of conducting missionary operations,† but to my father belongs the honour of discerning it much earlier than most others.

He was also one of those who deeply felt the importance of raising up an efficient native agency, for carrying on the work of evangelisation in heathen countries. He had the honour, at a special meeting of the board of directors April 20, 1840, to propose a resolution, the passing of which led to the establishment of the seminary at Bangalore, for training pious natives for the Christian ministry in India; and his opinion, strongly expressed in favour of this measure, greatly contributed to its adoption.

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* Mr. Orme died May 8, 1830. The author still cherishes the memory of this lamented friend.

† The Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel lays down this rule: "To make a mission thoroughly effective, there should be at least *four* missionaries labouring together."—Prize Essay on Christian Missions, p. 330.

I have been favoured with some remarks in reference to my father's connexion with this great Society, from its historian, and for many years esteemed foreign secretary, Rev. William Ellis, which will be read with interest :—

"Your honoured father was one of the few surviving founders of the London Missionary Society. He had witnessed its formation, watched its progress, and welcomed its success. In the morning of his days it had been his privilege to imbibe a portion of that spirit of expansive benevolence and zeal, in which the Society originated, and to bear a part in the early stages of its organisation. His name had appeared in the first list of its directors in honourable association with others, justly regarded as amongst the most eminent in the British churches; at some of its first deliberations he had presided, and the frequency with which his name at this period appears in the records of its proceedings, shows the zeal and devotedness with which he consecrated himself to its service. And though, subsequently, his attention was more especially directed to other objects, most important in their bearing on the interests of religion in England, and he entered upon a walk of usefulness peculiarly his own, in which he had no equal, he remained a steady friend and supporter of the London Missionary Society.

"On the retirement of Mr. Hankey from the treasurership of the Society, an office which he had long honourably and advantageously filled, the consent of your father to become his successor, afforded very cordial satisfaction to the members and friends of that great Institution. He brought to the important post a judgment matured by an active and observant course of forty years, spent not in speculating, but in acting; not in contending about minor points of Christian doctrine, or discipline, or forms of worship, but in erecting edifices for the worship of God, and endeavouring to meet the increasing demands of his country for an intelligent, pious, and efficient ministry.

"Although your father's advancing years, and the claims of objects to which his life had been devoted, precluded his affording the attention that would otherwise have been given to what may be termed the routine business of the Mission-house, the officers of the Society uniformly received his willing attention and his cheerful co-operation, in promoting its interests, while he was always ready to take his part in its more public proceedings. His presence at its various meetings in Exeter Hall, or elsewhere, whether he presided or not, was always welcomed with those feelings of hallowed delight which affection, esteem, and gratitude inspired.

"The part he took in the deliberative proceedings of the Directors, was characterised by careful attention to the statements of others, while the remarks he himself offered were concise, clear, and in general conclusive. He appeared readily to perceive all the important points of any question, and, disregarding the minor details of the subject, expressed his own views with a degree of distinctness and point which seldom failed to secure for them a respectful consideration. The effect produced by the statement of his opinions on these occasions was always heightened by the evident strength and sincerity of his own religious feelings. Those feelings were characterised in no ordinary degree by the constraining love of Christ, and a deep sense of the value of the soul, which rendered him at all times peculiarly interested in whatever related to the glory of his Saviour or the salvation of men. Hence those communications which referred either to the direct proclamation of the Gospel among the heathen, or to the conversion of souls, were observed to be to him at all times the most interesting.

"Besides the aid of his counsels, his contributions, and the influence of his piety, your father's official connexion with the Society was productive of other and not less important advantages. Among these might be specified the removal of a feeling of apprehension which had occasionally appeared, that the efforts of the churches to propagate the Gospel abroad, interfered with a just regard to the claims of home. To these claims no individual had given a larger measure of attention, or more munificent support than your father; and the fact that while the interests of religion at home received his undiminished and uninterrupted regard, he filled the highest office in a society specially devoted to the propagation of the Gospel abroad, could not fail to exhibit his own exemption from such apprehension, and to illustrate and enforce the gratifying fact that the work, like the faith of the church, is but one, that the efforts put forth in dependence on the influence and blessing of the same Divine Spirit, in the several departments of Christian exertion, are but parts of one comprehensive and harmonious system of means whereby He whose 'kingdom ruleth over all,' is accomplishing his purposes of mercy, and 'subduing all things unto Himself.'"

The concluding remarks of Mr. Ellis suggest an interesting question as to the relative proportion to be observed in the contributions of individuals towards the spread of the Gospel at home and abroad. My father was always ready to give to the foreign missionary cause. He did not act as if he considered his *first* donation of £100 a kind of composition, or subscription for life. He afterwards gave at different times several sums of £50 and £100, and in the year 1842 presented a contribution of £200. But if he gave *hundreds* for the conversion of the idolatrous heathen, he gave *thousands* toward carrying on the work of God at home. The duty of every individual Christian (not absolutely poor) to give according to his ability, in order to promote the diffusion of Christ's Gospel, *both* in his native land and in foreign countries, whether heathen or nominally Christian, is placed beyond question or dispute; but the *proportion* may not be a matter of easy adjustment. So far as my father's judgment can be inferred from his own practice, it would appear that he considered his own country as presenting more imperative claims, at least as making a legitimate demand to a much *larger* share of pecuniary contribution.

So far from thinking that too much is done for the cause of foreign missions, I never look at the list of contributors, especially of annual subscribers, to that noble institution, the London Missionary Society, without astonishment and grief at the low scale of general contribution toward so great a work as the conversion of the heathen world to the faith of Christ; but if there are many who ought to do much more for *that* object, ought not the same persons also to do *manifold more* for the conversion of those who are perishing in ignorance and sin in their own country, perhaps many thousands immediately around them, almost at their very doors? May not our Lord's words be justly applied to not a few—"*This* ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone?"

In the year 1836 was formed the Colonial Missionary Society, in connexion with the Congregational Union of England and Wales, in order to supply, in some measure, the deplorable lack of spiritual instruction among British subjects—many of them natives of Great Britain—resident in the colonial dependencies of the empire. The claims of "our brethren according to the flesh," suffering in distant lands a famine of the bread of life, were at once acknowledged and felt by my father, whose name appears in the first printed circular as a contributor of £50. He was also a member of the first committee, and gave another £50 in 1842. Previously indeed to the formation of the society, he had contributed to this important object. I find by a letter of acknowledgment, dated Dec. 9, 1834, that he had some time before promised £30 toward the erection of a respectable and commodious Congregational chapel in Montreal.

He longed to see Christian churches formed, and appropriate church-buildings erected in all the more important rising towns, built by those who have been compelled by the pressure of circumstances to expatriate themselves; and he thought such persons had a right to look for not a little help from those whom a gracious Providence still permitted to breathe their native air. I believe he sent out at his own expense, and aided in supporting for a time, two young ministers, who proceeded to Hobart Town; besides contributing to chapels at Toronto, and elsewhere.

He was also one of the earliest patrons of the Home Missionary Society, established in August, 1819, for calling in the aid of the principle of association for promoting the great work to which his previous life had been devoted—the spread of the Gospel in his own country. He presented to its funds, at different times, five donations of £10. 10*s.* ; one (in 1828) of £25 ; and another (in 1840) of £50. He also presided at its anniversary meeting in Exeter Hall, in May, 1839.

CHAPTER XXV.

CHAPELS IN NORFOLK AND VARIOUS OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY TO WHICH MY FATHER CONTRIBUTED—LARGE DONATIONS TO NEW CHAPELS AT OXFORD, MARCH, CHATTERIS, PORTSMOUTH, DERBY, ETC.—CHAPEL BUILT BY HIM AT DOVER.

I MAY introduce this chapter by noticing a report which at one time obtained extensive circulation, that a very large sum of money having been bequeathed to my father for the purpose of building chapels, a considerable proportion of what he contributed to that object, was derived from funds not properly his own. The fact in which this report originated, was the following.

That honourable woman, the late Viscountess Glenorchy, who was a purchaser and builder of chapels before my father, had been led, in 1784, by a providential circumstance, to purchase a small chapel and house adjoining Matlock Bath.* During the next year she resided in the house for several months. Writing Sept. 2, 1785, she says,—"The Lord has given me a delightful habitation in this place, and the prospect of some souls being brought to the knowledge of the Gospel, which is preached under my roof." By a deed executed February 17, 1785, immediately after the completion of the purchase, she gave the chapel, house, and furniture to Rev. Jonathan Scott, and, after his death, to his wife. By her will, dated Dec. 6, 1785, she bequeathed £5000 to Mr. Scott "for the educating of young men for the ministry, and other religious purposes."* She died July 17, 1786, aged 43. Mr. Scott died May 28, 1807.

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* The circumstance is thus related in the interesting Life of Lady Glenorchy, by the Rev. Dr. T. S. Jones. While travelling [in August, 1784] "she reached Matlock on a Saturday. There her carriage broke down, which obliged her to remain over the Sabbath. On making inquiries, as she usually did, wherever she went, concerning the state of religion in

At the death of his widow, who survived him several years, about £3000, being part of the £5000 bequeathed to Mr. Scott by Lady Glenorchy, undisposed of by his widow, came into the possession of my father, which he appropriated to the purposes specified—"the propagation of the Gospel, especially the education of young ministers." This he appears to have regarded as a fulfilment in his own experience of that promise, "He that watereth [others] shall be watered also himself."†

About the year 1832, the Rev. Robert Littler, then minister of the chapel in Matlock Bath, having heard

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this village, and finding it very low, she was induced to make proposals for purchasing a small, but neat house, originally built for the residence of the managing partner of a cotton mill; and which had a chapel adjoining capable of containing three hundred persons."—p. 501.

* Life of Lady Glenorchy, 1822. p. 517. † Prov. xi. 25.

various reports in that place and the neighbourhood, tending to cast reflections on my father's character, as if he had withholden property left to him by Mr. Scott, for the benefit of this chapel, or the support of its minister, kindly determined to speak to him on the subject. Having done so privately, and found my father—as he always was—open, frank, and unreserved in his communications—his consent being at once obtained—the two deacons of the church were called in, that they might hear him repeat what he had unequivocally stated to Mr. Littler himself—viz. that the whole amount which he had received had been, long before, appropriated to the objects specified by Lady Glenorchy.

My father came into possession of the chapel and house on the resignation of Mr. Scott's successor, the late Rev. John Wilson, in October, 1830. Soon after the settlement of Mr. Littler, which took place in the next year, he ordered pews to be substituted for benches, the gallery to be reconstructed, and other improvements to be made at his own expense, the amount of bills being upwards of £130.

It was an object with my father to give in such a manner as to excite and stimulate others to liberality. In a letter to Rev John Alexander, dated April 24, 1818, after referring to the high price asked for ground for the proposed new chapel at Norwich, he adds, " the situation is so important that it is better to give double or treble for such a site, than to take one unsuitable. I am glad it does not discourage your friends. All they have to do is *to double their contributions*, from the highest to the lowest. It is making the best use of money, and happy are those who devise liberal things. I am applied to on all sides, and must distribute something to all proper cases. From what I saw of Norfolk, I am convinced that it needs rousing. To obtain a new chapel at Wells, I offered £50;* and I feel disposed to do the same for your new chapel, in the confident expectation that it will stimulate all your friends and others in the various chapels in Norwich to give liberally. I hope the building will be *sufficiently large*, that you may not repent afterwards that you had not more faith. Remember the population, and be assured that ardent piety in the minister, with unremitting diligence and zeal, will do wonders." . . . .

In a postscript he says, "A large chapel when filled, allows of an overplus to repay those who have lent. But donations are far preferable."

To the account given in a previous chapter of what my father contributed towards the building of new chapels in various places, a long list of different sums might be added, but I shall only mention some of the larger contributions which have come under my notice.

In July, 1828, to encourage the purchase of the Independent chapel which then belonged to an individual at Fakenham in Norfolk, he offered to give £50 when the trust deed was executed. This was done a few months afterward.

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* Besides this £50 toward the chapel at Wells, which was opened Sept. 24, 1817, he gave £10 when galleries were erected in 1826.

In 1829 he contributed £40 to a chapel at Lane End, Staffordshire. In 1830, he gave to new chapels at Macclesfield and Bromsgrove, each £50, and a like sum to the rebuilding of a chapel at Enfield.

My father's attention had been directed, in the year 1813, by the late Rev. Dr. Bogue, to Oxford, as a place greatly needing increased provision of evangelical instruction.* Several years, however, elapsed, before an energetic movement took place toward the building of an Independent chapel in that city. In the year 1831, arrangements were made for carrying this desirable object into effect. A committee was formed there, consisting of eleven persons, whose joint contributions amounted to £690. The treasurer was the late Samuel Collingwood, Esq., printer to the University of Oxford, who gave £200. My father showed his great desire to promote this object by subscribing £500 toward it.

This good work was commenced in a manner highly honourable to all parties concerned. A printed circular was issued, announcing that "a house for the worship of God, and the proclamation of the glorious Gospel of salvation, was about to be erected in the midst of a dense population, in the city of Oxford," the purchase of a suitable freehold property having been effected; and stating that the persons who formed the committee for carrying the purpose into effect, were all connected with the church and congregation under the pastoral care of the Rev. W. Copley; and that, while cherishing every friendly and Christian feeling towards both the pastor and congregation, they felt it their duty and their privilege to engage in this extension of the public means of grace, and thus to supply, in some measure, "the acknowledged paucity of spiritual labourers, amidst a population of twenty thousand souls."*

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* See p. 302, ante

A recommendation is subjoined from Mr. Copley, which is thus introduced: "It is gratifying to me to observe the friendly and Christian feeling towards the existing congregation and its pastor, expressed in the foregoing statement, together with the zeal and concern manifested to supply the spiritual necessities of the increasing population of this city." Mr. Copley added a subscription of £5.

In May, 1832, my father laid the first stone of a larger and more commodious chapel at Windsor, to which he contributed £50. On his return home from Manchester, in 1833, he laid the first stone of a new chapel at Leek, in Staffordshire, giving £50 toward the building. He was frequently requested to undertake, and in several instances consented to perform this ceremony, which, although perhaps in itself unexceptionable, requires to be narrowly watched and cautiously guarded, lest it degenerate into a superstitious rite. If English Nonconformists have not learned to be scrupulously careful in this matter, the clearest lessons of their history have been thrown away upon them, and their honoured forefathers have "suffered so many things in vain."*

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* An account of this neat and beautiful chapel may be found in the Congregational Magazine, for May, 1833, p. 260.

On such occasions my father was never at a loss for appropriate topics. I have heard him more than once refer with warmth and energy to the *grand truths* to be taught and inculcated within the walls about to be reared, especially that which he always regarded, and justly regarded, as the capital truth—the sum and substance of the Gospel—Christ crucified. His thoughts were naturally led to the foundation laid by God in Zion, that elect and precious chief corner stone, that sure foundation of hope for a lost race, the solid, immovable rock on which the Christian church is being erected, and upon which all who come to it as to a living stone—in the exercise of a lively faith—are built up as living stones, forming part of the great spiritual temple which its Divine Architect is rearing "to the praise of the glory of his grace."

In 1834, he gave to a second chapel at Halstead, and to a new chapel at Leamington, £100 each.

My father had the pleasure of seeing a great revival at Dorking—after the removal of the unworthy minister referred to in preceding pages—under the pastorship of the late Rev. John Whitehouse, and his successor, the late Rev. Alfred Dawson. During the ministry of the latter, a larger chapel was found necessary, of which he laid the first stone, Sept. 3, 1834, giving £50 towards the building. The prayer contained in the passage from the 90th Psalm, inscribed on a brass plate, deposited in the stone, has already been answered in reference to this place—"Let thy work appear unto thy servants," &c., and will, I trust, be answered, in future years, yet more abundantly. My father attended the ordination of the present pastor, Rev. R. Connebee.*

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* I need scarcely say that my father's mode of performing this ceremony was perfectly simple; but I remember having heard, on one occasion of this kind, in the prayer offered immediately afterward, expressions in reference to the act of laying the stone, which appeared to me very exceptionable.

In the year 1834, my father received a letter from Rev. W. Holmes, of Wisbech, in reference to March, in Cambridgeshire, to which place his attention had been directed by a letter sent to him from a poor man, who described the spiritual destitution of its inhabitants, and inquired whether an effort could not be made to raise in it an Independent congregation. This letter Mr. Holmes forwarded to my father, mentioning also that the population of March was upwards of 5000. In his reply, after remarking that no town in the kingdom containing 5000 inhabitants ought to be without an Independent chapel, my father authorised Mr. Holmes to hire a room or other temporary place, and get it fitted up at his expense. He also promised to provide a minister, and bear all expenses for six months. The only place that could be obtained was a large granary, which had been fitted up as a theatre, and was occupied every season by a company of itinerant players. The fittings of this place cost £64; and, upon the account being sent to my father, he remitted the amount by return of post.*

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* See p. 423 ante. I cannot refrain from a slight passing notice of a venerable matron, the late Mrs. Mary Alexander, who was for many years a nursing mother to this church, and of whose great kindness I have a very pleasant and grateful recollection.

The minister provided by him was Mr. Clement Dukes, who, after pursuing his studies upon Dr. Williams's foundation at Glasgow University, had been placed for a year, at his expense, under the instruction of the Rev. R. W. Newland, then of Hanley. The granary was opened Nov. 2, 1834, and in six weeks the congregation increased from between twenty and thirty, to 500 on Lord's-day evenings.

Mr. Holmes, in a letter to my father, dated Jan. 8, 1835, describing the result of a visit made by him to March, at the request of a gentleman resident there, during which, accompanied by Mr. Dukes, he called on several of the most respectable families, to ascertain whether they were disposed to assist in the erection of a chapel, and the support of its minister, he says—"We are everywhere most cordially received. The reply in almost every instance was to this effect :—'We are strict church people, but no bigots. Our church is far off; it will not contain one-seventh part of the population. There is plenty of room for you. We rejoice in the effort you are making, and heartily wish you success. We greatly admire the preaching in the

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* March is in the parish of Doddington, one of the largest, and to the clergy, most productive parishes in the kingdom, containing 40,000 acres, the average tithe being 5*s*. 6*d*. per acre.

Acre; it is very different from anything we have heard before,'" &c. Although several offered to contribute to the erection of a chapel, yet that would not have been accomplished without my father's usual exercise of faith, courage, and liberality. He was so much pleased with the unexpected success of the first effort, that he directed Mr. Dukes to purchase a suitable piece of freehold land for the erection of a chapel. In April, 1836, a beautiful Gothic structure with one gallery was opened. For this chapel, which will accommodate about 500 persons, the contract was under £900. My father promised to give £300, provided contributions were obtained from other persons to the same amount. He gave, however, £400, and in 1839, £200 to clear off the remaining debt. His contribution altogether to this place could not have been much less than £700. But here, as in almost every place, he lived to see the fruit of his liberality, in the establishment of a permanent congregation. The bread which he largely cast upon the waters was not lost, but will be found with much increase after many days.

My father's attention had been directed to the deplorable spiritual condition of the town of Chatteris, in the Isle of Ely, by the circumstance, that before he quitted business, on his return home from Wisbech, he halted there for the Sabbath, and found only a small Methodist chapel, and a superabundant supply of hyper-Calvinism. He did not forget or lose sight of this place; and his desire to see an Independent chapel there, was gratified through the encouragement afforded by his own liberality, many years after. When he visited March in 1836, he made inquiries about the state of Chatteris, and finding it still greatly in need of increased spiritual provision, he undertook to make an effort to plant a Congregational church in that place. A barn was rented, and fitted up. At midsummer, 1837, students from Highbury College were sent to preach ; a congregation was gathered and a chapel built. My father's contribution to this place was, for rent and expenses £50, toward the chapel £300.

In 1835, he offered £50 to encourage the building of a new (second) chapel at Stroud, in Gloucestershire, which had been proposed by the excellent minister then at that place, Rev. John Burder. In acknowledging this, (April 18,) Mr. Burder says, " Your offer did much towards encouraging us to persevere in the project."

My father was very desirous that a respectable Independent chapel should be built at Diss, in Norfolk. A student from Highbury College was sent to that place in 1835, and a chapel built the same year, neither so large nor so lofty as he would have recommended, had he been previously consulted. He however contributed toward it £50. In the autumn of 1836, after attending the services at the opening of a new chapel at Halesworth, he visited Diss, and undertook to conduct the two services at the chapel on Lord's-day, Oct. 9, when collections were to be made, to which he gave £10. On his return he sent a supply of books for the Sunday-school. Some months after he was gratified by hearing of the advancement of the work at Diss. A correspondent thus writes to him (Aug. 9, 1837,) "Your visit to Diss, I believe was highly beneficial. The people frequently inquire about you, and would be glad to see and hear you again. I feel the debt of obligation which I owe to you, and to the college." My father (October 23,) says, "I am glad to learn that Mr. Field is to be set apart as your pastor on next Wednesday. I hope he will prove a burning and shining light; and that the congregation will so increase, as to make a larger chapel necessary. I have pleasure in recollecting that I have paid Diss one visit. I should like, if life is continued, to see it again; but it cannot be this week, for I was previously engaged to attend the opening of a new chapel in Reading." In another letter (Aug. 4, 1838) he says, "I quite approve the decision you have come to, to take down the present chapel, and erect a larger one with a good school-room. I wish you could do the whole at once, and commence immediately." He then proceeds to give advice as to various particulars—area and height of building, arrangement of pews, &c. May 21, 1839, he writes, "I have just received the agreeable information, that your friends have determined to erect a new chapel on a more convenient site. I hope you will then have a *good-sized chapel*. I am pleased with the liberal sum subscribed." To this building my father contributed £100. He also attended the opening service, Sept. 26, 1840.

The series of letters from which a few sentences have been transcribed above, are but a specimen of many others, all tending to show how much my father's heart was in this good work, and how ready he was at all times to help it forward, not only with money, but also with such counsel and advice as his experience in such matters qualified him to give.

A small chapel at Letherhead, in Surrey, had been for many years struggling with the difficulties not unfrequently experienced in small rural towns. In 1836 the lease of the building expired, and my father, in order to secure the chapel from alienation, purchased the freehold of it and of some old houses adjoining, for £1000. He sold the other part of the property in 1837, for £650, retaining the chapel and sufficient ground for a larger building. A neat chapel, considerably larger than the former, has, since his death, been erected, and legally vested in trustees. His donation to this place (including expenses) may be stated as about £400.

My father, well knowing how inadequate was the provision made for the spiritual wants of a large and rapidly increasing population at Dover, while staying there in the summer of 1837, made inquiries for ground in a suitable situation, and commissioned a person to purchase for him land in a new street, to be sold by auction in September. This was bought for £370. A new chapel, (sixty-two feet by forty-four,) having a small school-room communicating with it, was built at his expense (£1780), and opened July 12, 1838.

At a meeting of the Independent ministers of the district in which Dover is situated, held June 8, 1842, a resolution was passed expressive of "the high sense entertained by them of Mr. Wilson's generosity and devotion to the cause of Christ," in erecting and conveying this chapel to trustees. The school-room adjoining has been enlarged by the congregation at their own expense.

In 1822, a small chapel was built at Herne Bay, in Kent, which, being found very inadequate to the rapidly increasing population and number of visitors, representations to that effect were made to my father, who, in 1835, visited the place, and offered to subscribe £100 towards a building-fund for the erection of a larger chapel. This offer encouraged friends on the spot to open a subscription. A sufficient sum, however, was not obtained.

In 1837, my father purchased for £2000, a large and handsome chapel built at this place for Episcopal worship; but after some time, not finding it likely to succeed as a Dissenting chapel, he entered into a negociation with a gentleman of the Church of England, who wished to purchase it for his son, a clergyman, and who was introduced to him by the present Bishop of Calcutta, that honoured individual bearing testimony, from personal acquaintance, to the Christian and ministerial character of the young clergyman, particularly to the fact, that he was "decidedly evangelical in doctrine."

My father, having such an offer from a person who wished to place in it a faithful preacher of the Gospel, was induced to sell the chapel in 1840, from a conviction that the money which he had laid out in the purchase might be more usefully employed.

In several communications addressed, during the spring of 1840, to Rev. G. D. Mudie, (now of Epping) he expressed his desire that the raising of an Independent congregation in Portsmouth, which had "long been thought of," and which he considered "most important," should be carried into effect, and his hope that friends in the town and neighbourhood would "come forward with liberal subscriptions," and the neighbouring ministers give to the attempt their sanction. He says: "If our denomination is not *progressive*, especially when we see the activity of the Church of England, I shall be ashamed of being connected with it." Freehold premises having been offered in an eligible situation (St. Thomas's street) for £900, my father offered to give £300 toward the purchase of them, provided the remainder could be obtained by gifts. Dec. 17th, he expressed regret that his liberal offer had not stimulated friends at Portsmouth, Portsea, and Gosport, to raise the other portion of the requisite sum. Subsequently, however, £400 was obtained as "a contribution from a lady in

Portsmouth." My father, besides the £300, afterward advanced £200, for which no claim was made.

The premises were purchased, and a beautiful although too expensive Gothic chapel erected on the spot, which was opened in September, 1842; but the affair became subsequently involved in great pecuniary embarrassment, from which it was not extricated without great trouble and labour on the part of a few individuals in London, one of whom undertook to raise £1000, in diminution of the debt.

A congregation has been raised, and a church gathered under the ministry of Rev. George Jones, late of Lyme Regis, who, in 1844, entered upon a sphere of labour then surrounded by great difficulties. These have been removed, and there is now a very encouraging prospect of usefulness.

Some old buildings at the back of this chapel have been fitted up and opened as rooms for day-schools.

In the year 1841, my father purchased, for £140, an eligible piece of freehold land at Ambleside in Westmoreland, upon which a neat and substantial chapel was afterwards built, toward which he contributed two donations of £50 each.

In 1842, measures were taken to raise a second Congregational church in Derby, the place which my grandfather loved so well, as to build for its inhabitants a place of worship. March 19, the church assembling in that building "presented its warmest thanks to my father for his munificent gift of £500 towards the erection of a new chapel in the town."

An elegant chapel in the London road, near the railway station, was opened in April, 1843. The whole remaining debt was, by a vigorous effort, cleared off in 1844.

Besides the chapels already mentioned, several others were built in various parts of the country, chiefly through his encouragement and advice, to which my father was a liberal contributor. To all the following, erected between the years 1830 and 1842, he gave £50 :—Ellesmere (new school and enlargement)—Sleaford—Reading—Arundel—Fareham—Brecon—Sudbury—Needham Market—Colchester, Burton-upon-Trent — Carlisle — Gateshead —Warminster—Totness—Topsham, and Croydon: to which may be added Salford, a second £50, Wigton, £100, Farringdon, £40, Halesworth, £35. To many others he gave £20, and other sums; but these I shall not attempt to enumerate, and I believe a full account of his contributions in this way could not be obtained.

I cannot forbear quoting my father's testimony to the duty of Congregational Nonconformists to increase the number of houses of God in places where the population is large and rapidly increasing.

Feb. 6, 1839. "OUR LARGE TOWNS ARE OF PRE-EMINENT IMPORTANCE."

Dec. 22, 1841. "We should erect ADDITIONAL CHAPELS IN LONDON AND ALL THE LARGE TOWNS."*

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* So early as Dec. 1828, writing to Rev. John Sibree, in reference to a chapel which was then to be sold at Coventry, he says, "I deeply lament that we have not a FUND for such purposes."

CHAPTER XXVI.

CONTRIBUTIONS BY MY FATHER TO VARIOUS CHAPELS IN THE IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF LONDON—METROPOLIS CHAPEL FUND—MEANS OF RAISING MONEY FOR NEW CHAPELS IN LONDON.

Notwithstanding the large amount which my father had advanced without interest for chapels in London, he was ever ready to help forward by liberal contributions the building of new chapels in the densely populated suburbs of the metropolis.

In 1827 he gave £100 toward the erection of Marlborough chapel in the Kent road, where a large congregation has been gathered, of which Rev. Henry Richard is minister.

The ancient English Presbyterian meeting-house in Jewry-street, Aldgate, in which Dr. Lardner formerly preached, having been closed for two years, was fast going to decay, when a lease of it was taken in 1830 by a builder, who engaged to make very extensive external repairs. The populous district in the neighbourhood of this chapel greatly needed additional means of evangelical instruction; and upon application being made to my father by the Rev. John Blackburn, he promptly gave £500 for the purchase of the lease of the chapel and a small house adjoining; Mr. Blackburn undertaking to provide the requisite funds for the necessary internal repairs, which, with the usual fittings, cost £473. The chapel was re-opened on Lord's-day, July 25, 1830, and the pulpit was afterward supplied by various ministers, and a Sunday-school established. A Congregational church was formed, in October, 1831; but although my father rendered considerable assistance toward the payment of the rent and other expenses, the original debt being increased, and an attempt to raise an amount sufficient to liquidate it not proving successful, the chapel was, in 1836, again disposed of. Had a suitable minister been obtained, the result might have been more favourable; but although this effort to raise another Congregational church in London failed, the chapel has not been alienated to a secular purpose, being still occupied for the preaching of the Gospel.

In 1833 my father gave £50 toward a new chapel in Esher street, Kennington, erected in consequence of Vauxhall chapel having been let by its minister, the late Rev. Francis Moore, to an Episcopalian clergyman, notwithstanding the earnest and repeated remonstrances of the Independent church, for whose use it was built.

In 1834 he contributed £100 to a large chapel and school-rooms in Bishopsgate street, built for the congregation which formerly met in White row, Spitalfields, of which Rev. Henry Townley then was, and continues to be the minister; and in 1842 he presented to this chapel a second donation of £50. In 1834 he also gave £50 to a new chapel in Mile End road, called Latimer chapel, of which he laid the first stone, May 27. In 1835 he gave to two chapels in Brompton, £25 each; in 1837, to Abney Chapel, Stoke Newington, £50; in 1841, to a new chapel in the Commercial road, £100; and in 1842, to the chapel in Harley street, Bow, £100.*

He gave to the new chapel in Frederick street, near the Regent's park, called Albany chapel, which was opened in April, 1836, two donations of £100 each. This place being oppressed by a heavy debt, was offered for sale a few years afterward, and purchased by a society, of which a brief account will be given in some following pages.

In January, 1837, a meeting was held at the Congregational Library, my father being chairman, at which an important institution, called "The Metropolis Chapel Fund Association," was formed, for supplying with Christian ordinances, especially with the preaching of the Gospel, the destitute districts of London and its vicinity. A committee of twenty-four persons, besides five trustees, was appointed, and my father chosen treasurer, his name appearing in the first printed list as a contributor of £500, with a conditional promise of £1000, in case £20,000 were raised. From the address issued by the committee, I transcribe a few sentences, as the statements and appeal contained in them are equally applicable now, as at the time then present. Indeed, the frightfully *increasing* ratio at which the metropolitan population has multiplied since 1837, and still continues to multiply, gives double emphasis to this appeal.

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* My father did not limit his contributions for London to *chapels*. He gave at various times upwards of £100 to the Society for Promoting Christian Instruction, and five donations of £10. 10*s*. each to the London City Mission.

> "That the claims of London upon Christians of all denominations are painfully urgent, must be acknowledged by every considerate and serious observer. The supply of evangelical services is, in many districts, lamentably deficient.
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> "An appeal on behalf of the metropolis derives additional force from a view of its rapidly increasing population. In the last twenty years, the increase has been more than forty per cent. On this account, the proportion of places of worship to the amount of the population in London, is very much less than that in the country generally.
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> "As the exertions of all Christians are demanded, in order to overtake the wants of an increasing population, this object is proposed in no narrow or sectarian spirit. Rejoicing in the zealous exertions of other denominations, the members of this society desire, though not with a feeling of unhallowed rivalry, to take their share in the service of disseminating the Gospel, in such a manner as they conscientiously believe to be most in accordance with Holy Scripture. If they shrink from the labour, Protestant Nonconformity cannot retain its past and honourable distinction, of having been among the most effective instruments employed by Divine Providence to promote the religious and moral welfare of the British nation. Where a million and a half of immortal beings are collected, and accommodation is afforded in all the places of worship

for less than one-third of that vast multitude, no member of any denomination can justify himself in neglecting to sustain and extend the means of religious instruction.

"The building of chapels must involve a very considerable expenditure, but there is no other method of extending to a destitute neighbourhood a permanent and effectual administration of divine ordinances. Domiciliary visits, private prayer-meetings, the circulation of tracts, and similar expedients, are invaluable as preparatory movements; but to sustain their influence, and render it permanently beneficial, Christian churches must be organised in convenient buildings, in which zealous and devoted pastors may dispense the Gospel of Christ."

My father regularly attended the meetings of this committee, and gave to the business his unremitting attention. He laid the first stone of York road chapel, Lambeth, May 30, 1838, and for several years obtained the services of various ministers to supply the pulpit, and lived to see its present excellent minister, Rev. Dr. Alliott, settled, with a most encouraging prospect of usefulness, which has already been realised to a great extent.

My father's attention had been directed to Westminster early in 1832, by a gentleman who having been many years resident there, well knew the awful state of spiritual darkness in which multitudes of its teeming population had been long suffered to remain. No contrast can be more striking than was then presented by the two adjoining, and nearly connected, cities of London and Westminster—the former crowded with parish churches and Nonconformist chapels—the latter, with two or three Episcopal churches and chapels (besides the abbey), one Independent chapel, and two or three belonging to other denominations, affording altogether provision for about 11,000, out of a population of 54,000.

Several attempts to obtain suitable ground for a chapel proved unsuccessful. At length, most eligible freehold premises being advertised for sale, the committee of the Metropolis Chapel Fund, encouraged by the promise of £1000 from Charles Hindley, Esq., M.P., and £1000 from my father, as well as by other liberal subscriptions, purchased them, and commenced the building of a large and handsome chapel, in a very central situation, which was opened May 6, 1841. My father felt so deeply the importance of this attempt to supply the urgent wants of a wicked city, where scenes of vice and wretchedness abound in the immediate neighbourhood of the Queen's palace, the courts of law, and the houses of parliament, that he gave a second £1000; and he had the pleasure to witness the settlement of a young minister (Rev. Samuel Martin) in whom he felt much interest, and who has already proved "a burning and shining light" in that dark place.

By his large contribution to this chapel, and other advances for the fund, he considerably reduced his means of helping the country. In a letter to Rev. W. Lothian, dated May 7, 1840, he says:—

"I congratulate you on the good influence of your late exertions in the revival of the work of God. I am glad it is likely to stir up your friends to enlarge the chapel, which is, indeed, greatly needed. I hope all will do their utmost.

"I am applied to by all the ministers brought up at Hoxton and Highbury, and also by others, for aid in chapel building and enlargements, and have many calls at the present time. In addition, we are trying to erect new chapels in *London,* but I am sorry to say the Society is not well supported. To secure a piece of freehold ground in Westminster, I have advanced £2500. This makes me very poor, and prevents my helping others as I could desire. I wish to show my regard for you, and to stimulate your friends; and therefore, if you go forward, you may expect £10, which is all I can spare."

In a letter dated March 18, 1842, he says—"What can *an individual* do for buildings? *London* has the first claim on me, and I have advanced considerably for a new chapel in Westminster."*

He had, however, as an individual, done great things for London, and it now remains for the body of Christians to which he belonged, to rouse themselves to a united and vigorous effort for the spread of the Gospel and the multiplication of Christian churches, by the building of respectable chapels, in the vast and still rapidly extending metropolis. My father has done many good deeds for the house of his God, which will not be wiped out of the book of remembrance kept in heaven. "He, being dead, yet speaketh," in tones of solemn persuasion, and cheerful encouragement, urging us to proceed to the completion of the work which he was honoured to begin. The preceding pages have told of "the hand of his God, which was good upon him." Stimulated by his example, "Let us rise up and build." We have only to "strengthen our hands in God" for this good work; and in reply to the taunts of adversaries, who despise and deride us, we may adopt the words of Nehemiah, "The God of heaven he will prosper us; therefore, we his servants will *arise and build*."*

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* In a letter dated March 8, 1843, (a few months before his death) to Rev. Dr. Morison, who had requested a contribution from him toward the removal of a debt on the chapel at Brompton, he says—"I have sufficient reason to negative your request, when I say, that I am in advance £2000 for the Metropolitan Building Society, for which I receive no interest. But if you can by free gifts make up by the 1st of June £1200, I shall be inclined to give £50, as an encouragement to your friends." The £50 was paid after my father's death.

The work of building chapels in London is indeed great, and requires faith, courage, and liberality; but the voice of God, by his providence, is loudly calling us to prosecute this work with vigour. If great things are attempted, in humble dependence on the blessing of God, great things will be accomplished. Looking back to the past, we are constrained to say, "What hath God wrought!" He has visibly set the seal of his approbation to the labour of our hands, so far as we have engaged in this work. We have only to go on and prosper. According to our faith, so will it be unto us.

We—I speak now, as a native and inhabitant of the metropolis, to my London brethren—we have contributed largely to aid the building of chapels in all parts of the United Kingdom. If I may freely state my opinion, we have suffered chapel cases to be too indiscriminately brought to our great city. Let us, if we cannot at once *abolish*, at least regulate, and place under proper restrictions, the bad system (rather the bad effect of want of system) which renders personal applications—generally, alas! by *ministers*—an almost unavoidable evil. Let every one who lives in London, or any of its suburban districts, feel as my father felt, "LONDON HAS THE FIRST CLAIM UPON ME," and *act*, as he did, *accordingly*. Most persons in the habit of giving to chapel cases brought from the country, give not less probably on an average than a sovereign a week; yet how few, even of *those individuals*, have hitherto contributed at the same rate toward the Metropolitan Chapel Building Fund!

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* Nehemiah ii. 18—20.

With all respect I would take leave to ask the rich merchants and prosperous traders belonging to the Congregational churches of London, whether the place in the immediate neighbourhood of which they reside, with which they are intimately connected, and whence they derive their wealth, has not *special and peculiar claims* upon them?

London, as the metropolis, has claims upon the country, and the country is deeply indebted to London, for a large amount of pecuniary contribution; but much stronger, altogether paramount, are the claims which it has upon natives and residents. Until these claims are deeply felt, and practically acknowledged—until for the TWO MILLIONS of immortal beings immediately around us, *increasing* at the rate of *thirty thousand* in a year, and passing, in rapid succession, into the eternal world, at the rate of nine hundred a-week, much more adequate provision than now exists, shall be made, at our cost, of convenient and suitable buildings, in which they may assemble to hear words whereby—believing the things that are spoken unto them—they may be saved ; are we not, in some degree, accessory to their destruction, as we forbear to use the means that are in our power to deliver them from final and irretrievable ruin?* The Gospel, orally preached, still continues, as it was in apostolic times, God's chosen instrument for the salvation of men. It still "pleases God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

But the building of large chapels in public situations is expensive. Whence are the needful funds to be obtained? Much might be accomplished, speedily accomplished—for the matter is urgent,—if fifty individuals would unite together, and subscribe among themselves Ten Thousand Pounds, to constitute what might be called an Auxiliary Fund, to be raised in two or three years, the whole being gifts absolute, so far us the donors are concerned, but conditional to this extent, that the fund shall form a permanently reserved capital, to be applied by way of loan, not bearing interest, at least for a limited time, with a view to encourage churches and individuals in particular localities to raise a certain specified amount by gifts.

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* See Proverbs xxiv. 11, 12.

This cannot properly be regarded as exclusively the work of a few individuals. My own strong conviction is, that Christian churches, as churches, ought strenuously to engage in it, every member contributing as God has enabled him. There is one mode which I am persuaded would prove effectual for raising all the funds that would be required for this purpose, and indeed for any other, and that is a *weekly* rate of contribution. I do not mean the contribution of *a penny* a-week. I must solemnly protest against that mode, and earnestly deprecate its introduction, as alike contrary to Scripture and to common sense. That *all*—rich and poor, masters and servants, parents and children, should be asked and told that they are expected to give every one precisely the same sum, is not, I submit, in accordance with the New Testament law.

There is one passage, which I believe embodies the will of Christ in this matter. His apostle Paul, in writing to the Corinthians (1st Epistle, xvi. 1, 2,) after referring to the *order* which he had given to the churches of Galatia, concerning the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem, lays down the same law or rule for the church at Corinth—" upon the first day of the week, let *every one of you* lay by him in store *as God hath prospered him*"—that is, as the phrase is explained by a parallel text, (Acts xi. 29) *every one according to his ability*.

Are we not bound by that apostolic *order*, as those who are under the law to Christ? Or admitting it be not absolutely binding upon us as a general law—yet, if we choose, as matter of expediency and convenience, to introduce or urge the introduction of the weekly method of collecting funds, for whatsoever religious or charitable purpose, are we not bound to adopt it on the principle to which our great Master himself has thus given his direct sanction,—every one—not *a penny*, the same fixed sum—but according to his ability?*

I am happy to know that my father approved and recommended the adoption of this principle as a mode of raising funds for building chapels. In a paper now before me, in his own hand-writing, entitled, "*Sinking Fund for Building Chapels*," he proposes the "plan of raising money by a separate subscription of a penny to sixpence per week, according to the ability of each stated hearer." I should rather say, from a penny to a sovereign.

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* The same rule was enjoined by God under the Mosaic dispensation. At the three great feasts which all the males were required to attend, this law was established:—"They shall not appear before the Lord empty; every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee." Deut. xvi. 10, 16, 17.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MY FATHER'S VIEWS CONCERNING BAPTISM AND THE PRINCIPLES OF DISSENT—HIS LAST THOUGHTS IN REFERENCE TO PREACHING AND MINISTERIAL CHARACTER—ADMIRATION OF WHITEFIELD.

I CANNOT speak of my father as an *author.* He never wrote for the press, but he compiled, besides the 'Hints to Young Ministers,' already mentioned, two small tracts, entitled, 'A Dialogue on the Subjects and Mode of Baptism,' chiefly selected from a pamphlet published in 1784, by the late Rev. Jonathan Evans, of Foleshill; and 'Reasons for Dissent.' Of the former three editions were published.

He considered baptism as the rite of initiation, whereby proselytes to the Christian faith, from among Jews and heathen, were to be received as disciples, or subjects for instruction in the Christian church. He did not consider what is called saving faith as an indispensable qualification for baptism in the case of adults, but thought that all who professed to acknowledge the claims of Jesus as a divinely commissioned teacher, were immediately baptized, with their households, by the apostles, in order to their being afterward instructed in all the doctrines and duties of Christianity.

Baptism he considered as having taken the place, under the Christian dispensation, of the ancient rite of circumcision, instituted as a visible sign or token of the covenant of grace made with Abraham, who was to be a father of many nations, and in whom, through his great descendant Christ, all the kindreds of the earth were to be blessed. (Acts iii. 21 ; Gal. iii. 8.) That covenant, therefore, so far from being restricted to his posterity, was of a most comprehensive nature, and intended, ultimately, to include all nations.

Accordingly, by the apostolical commission, (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20,) baptism was to be administered to all the nations. But, as by the express direction of God, circumcision had been applied to infant children, they could not be excluded under the Gospel, the spirit and genius of which tend rather to enlarge, than to contract or abridge privileges.

The following extract will show my father's views on a point concerning which the advocates for infant baptism differ among themselves.

"*Q.* What children ought to be baptized?

"*A.* To confine the ordinance to the offspring of persons affording evidence that they are in a state of salvation, and to administer it to all infants indiscriminately, is equally improper. The design of baptism is to prepare a people for the Lord. It belongs not so properly to the pastoral office, as to that of promulgating the Gospel, according to the commission, 'Go, teach all nations, baptizing them,' &c. As the ordinance stands immediately connected with dispensing the means of grace, there is nothing in its nature which limits its administration; and the dispensation to which it belongs is of the most liberal kind. All parents, believing the divine authority of the Christian faith, and attending the means of religious instruction, may require baptism for their children. The command of the Redeemer cannot be fully observed, unless this ordinance be extended to as many adults as are willing to be his disciples, and as many infants or young persons as can be trained up in his fear.

"The design is, to bring the parents under additional obligations to watch over and instruct their children, as they become able to learn divine truth; and in connexion with their dedication, to encourage the hope that they will live to receive the blessing in the use of appointed means.

"Timothy's mother and grandmother taught him the Scriptures in his childhood, and thus he was, by the blessing of God, made wise unto salvation."

On the mode of administering this rite, he had very strong and decided opinions. He thought that the word baptize was used in Scripture to denote different modes of washing, and that the phraseology employed by the sacred writers, showed that the act spoken of was an application of water to the person, not a submersion of the whole body in water. Baptism, also, being emblematical of the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, and the sacred writers frequently speaking of the Holy Spirit as poured out upon persons, he considered that the most *scriptural* mode of administering the rite was pouring water upon the head of the subject, although he thought sprinkling, in the case of infants, both lawful and expedient, especially as the sprinkling of clean water, under the law, was an emblem significant of moral purification.

The following extract from the tract entitled, "Reasons for Dissent," will show that my father was a consistent Congregational Nonconformist.

"There is far greater importance in the principles of dissent, viewed in connexion either with the interests of vital religion at home, or the spread of the Gospel abroad, than many persons perceive. It is this importance, indeed, which constitutes their chief glory.

"The principles upon which the churches of Christ among Nonconformists are constituted, are, the right of private judgment, and the sufficiency of the inspired volume—the only infallible standard of truth—to guide the humble and diligent inquirer on all subjects relating to faith and discipline.

"The whole business of religion is a matter of conscience between God and a man's own soul, not to be regulated in any degree by civil legislation.

"The Bible denounces the friend of the world as the enemy of God; but how can these distinctions be preserved, when the world is the church, and the church is the world?

"Even under the Jewish theocracy all support to religious worship was voluntary and free. The payment of tithe was secured by no temporal penalty.

"Christ, who was himself poor and despised, says, 'My kingdom is not of this world.' He sought not its honour or its wealth. He selected his first ministers from the fishermen of Galilee—conferred no distinction upon them, but that of being least, and servants of all—called them to suffer poverty, contempt, reproach, and persecution.

"The first Christians had no political head, no splendid hierarchy, no state connexion. For three centuries they continued separate from the world, managing their own affairs, relying on their own resources. The fallacy of a national church is revealed by the spiritual design of a Christian church, which is to consist of persons called out of the world, called to be saints. These are to elect their own office-bearers, and to support their own ministers voluntarily.

"In the apostolic age every church was a congregational assembly, and every bishop or pastor had the oversight but of one church.

"The apostolic office was not designed for perpetuity; and consequently the apostles have no successors. The two terms, bishop and presbyter or elder, are interchangeably used in the Scriptures, to denote one and the same office."

Among the objections to the Church of England service, prominence is given to what my father justly regarded as the *πρωτον ψευδος*, the first and fundamental error of the Established Church—that dangerous and anti-scriptural dogma, that spiritual regeneration, the renovation of the heart by the Holy Ghost, invariably accompanies the due administration of an external rite. "All who are baptized, are born again, according to the doctrine of the Church of England."

This "grievous error" runs through the whole scheme of its ritual teaching, and is asserted, in the most express and positive terms, in solemn forms of prayer and thanksgiving, used in the baptismal and confirmation services, the words being employed in the most universal and unqualified sense.

His great objection to the Church catechism, was the explicit manner in which this popish dogma is therein taught, words being put into the mouths of children indiscriminately, which clearly affirm, that in their baptism they were "called unto a state of salvation," being "made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven." He thought that by such teaching, an awful delusion was practised on the souls of men, and that those who adopt and use such forms of public service and catechetical instruction, do, in fact, although it may be unintentionally, deceive the people, and cause too many of them to "trust in a lie." Indeed, highly as my father esteemed many clergymen of the Established Church, he greatly marvelled how any man, who did not believe in baptismal regeneration, could "with a good conscience," officiate as a clergyman in that church—the condition of clerical conformity being a solemn declaration of "*full assent and consent to all and everything* contained in and prescribed by the Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church."

The second edition of my father's "Hints to Young Ministers, revised, with considerable additions," exhibits in a condensed form, his matured views of the qualifications requisite to constitute "a good minister of Jesus Christ," and indispensable to high efficiency and eminent success. The following is a brief summary of the chief features in his idea of ministerial excellence :—

He must be a man of God, "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost;" possessed himself of eminent religious attainments, exhibiting a high degree of spirituality, intense love to Christ, (the great qualification of all true spiritual shepherds, John xxi. 15—17,) ardent zeal for the glory of God, entire, unreserved consecration to his service, tender pity for the perishing souls of immortal men, full and accurate knowledge of the Scriptures, especially vivid perception of the great evangelical doctrines, intimate acquaintance with the simple but sublime plan and method of human salvation—"the glorious Gospel of the blessed God," and deep experimental knowledge of the peace and joy which flow from believing in Jesus.

In order to this, he must be—

1. A man of devotional habits, "continuing instant in prayer," both for himself, and for those that hear him; by wrestling earnestness, and persevering importunity, travailing as it were in birth, till Christ be formed in the hearts of his hearers.

2. He must be an indefatigable student, rising early every day, "not even excepting Monday;"* "devoting much time to private intellectual toil," close thought, and diligent application to study in solitude, as well as to judicious and appropriate reading; a frugal economist of time, conscientiously employing and improving it to the best advantage by

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* One of his oral counsels was, "Rise early; I never knew a minister of early habits fail in his ministry."

a methodical distribution of the several hours of every day. To secure this, there must be the determined resistance of all natural and constitutional tendencies to indolence, a constant watching and earnest striving against "the great sin of idleness."

3. A laborious explorer of the inspired word, devoting much time every day to the diligent study of the sacred oracles, ambitious of that highest praise, to be "mighty in the Scriptures," searching them as for hidden treasures, digging in this inexhaustible mine for the precious ore which, remaining concealed from superficial readers, will be found by the man who is determined, by the help of God, to accomplish a diligent search.

In addition to earnest prayer for Divine light and guidance, he will avail himself of the best commentators, as helps, to enable him to find out the true sense—the mind of God, in his word; making the true and proper use of them, not to supersede, but to stimulate and encourage his own inquiries.

4. As a man, he must be, in his whole deportment, such as all persons have a right to expect that a Christian minister should be; an example to the flock, holy in all manner of conversation, exhibiting the mind that was in Christ, having learned of Him who was meek and lowly in heart, clothed with humility, amiable and conciliatory in manner, gentle and affable, not easily provoked, ready to forgive injuries, yielding and placable, maintaining a dignified decorum, while avoiding undue familiarity, yet

treating all with respect, and inferiors with condescension; not selfish, covetous, and grasping, but generous and disinterested, as one who is aspiring after that high order of excellence—the entire abnegation of self, the total "renunciation of all worldly schemes of happiness;" a man of truth and integrity, avoiding all exaggeration, the least approach to deceit, or the slightest degree of misrepresentation; his whole course marked by prudence, "the want of which will cloud the brightest talents, and eclipse the greatest gifts."

My father's *last* sentiments in reference to the great topics of preaching, were in exact accordance with those expressed at a much earlier period—that the appropriate subjects for the pulpit are, the fall and apostacy of man, and his recovery by the grace of God through faith in the Lord Jesus,—sin the disease of our nature, Christ the great physician and healer of souls, by his blood applied to the conscience through the power of the Holy Spirit,—and that the manner of delivering this message of salvation should be earnest, animated, and energetic, accompanied with close and pointed, but affectionate, appeals to the conscience of every hearer.

The following passages are from short and hastily written letters to young ministers, during the last years of his life:—

"Oct. 5, 1841. Let me advise you to keep the three R's, Ruin, Redemption, Regeneration, as the grand points to be always brought forward, with that variety of illustration which the Scriptures supply. *The cross of Christ is always new.*"

"July 9, 1842. I hope this will find you going on comfortably and usefully in preaching with energy a full Gospel."

"Aug. 16. I am glad that you are going on with a single eye to the glory of God, and the salvation of souls. You are set for the defence of the Gospel. . . . . . I hope you will keep the grand truths prominently before the people while you insist on the use of appointed means. . . . . . Preach fully and affectionately *the Gospel.* Do not neglect the application to different classes. You may be sure that Mr. Whitefield was right when he said, 'Application is the life of preaching.'"

He retained to the last his opinion concerning the duty of ministers to use great plainness of speech. He quotes a saying of Archbishop Usher, "It will require all your learning to make things plain."

Writing May 18th, 1842, to a minister in the country, who was coming to preach at Westminster Chapel, he says, "You cannot speak too plainly on the great truths of salvation." About the same time he copied the following sentence from Philip Henry: "We study how to speak that you may understand us, and I never think that I can speak plainly enough when I am speaking about souls and their salvation."

He believed that the right style of preaching and mode of delivery would attract hearers, and that, to a considerable extent, the attendance is a fair test of the quality and character of the ministry.

He once remarked, "Some people ask—Is the minister intellectual? I prefer inquiring—Does he draw?" To another minister he said—"Nothing but the constant exhibition of what Christ has done for us, and what the Holy Spirit does in us, will ever keep up our congregations." "Every year of my ministry," adds my informant, "increases my conviction of the truth and importance of this remark."

It was to the last his judgment and conviction that every sermon should be decidedly evangelical in its general character, that although the immediate subject may not be any one specific doctrine of the Gospel, yet there should be so much of clear, explicit statement of the truth concerning Jesus Christ, that a casual hearer might be able to learn from it the way of salvation. He considered it the great duty and business of ministers to *preach the Gospel*, and thus instrumentally to save souls. He regarded the words of the pythoness at Philippi, as containing a just description of their office—"These men are the servants of the most high God, who *show unto us the way of salvation;*"* and he thought the minister who failed to do this, by interweaving the great truths in every discourse—who did not act at all times as if "the ministry he had received from the Lord Jesus" was "to testify the Gospel of the grace of God," could not be "pure from the blood of all men."† "No sermon should fail of so far developing the principles of the Gospel, as distinctly to point out the way of salvation."*

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* Acts xvi. 17.

† Acts xx. 24, 26.

No man understood better than my father what may be called *the secret of success* in the Christian ministry. He was not unaware, indeed, or unmindful that all useful efficiency depends on the efficacious blessing of God, but he often said, 'God blesses the most appropriate and suitable means;' and he had the highest authority for ascribing very much of the successful result of preaching, mediately and instrumentally, to the manner and style of address, as well as to the doctrine preached. In the synagogue at Iconium, we are told by the sacred historian, Paul and Barnabas "*so spake*, that a great multitude both of the Jews, and also of the Greeks, believed."†

He well understood the nature of genuine eloquence, and how much the effect of a sermon depends on "earnest utterance"—"an impressive delivery." He knew that the most effectual means to produce feeling in the hearers, is for the preacher himself to feel. "All men are orators when they feel." He knew, in short, that under God, much—in a sense, *all*—depends on the adaptation of the means employed on the part of the human instrument, accompanied with a deep sense of dependence on the Divine blessing, earnest prayer, and confident, believing expectation of success.

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* He quotes this passage from Baxter:—"The work of conversion is the great thing we must drive at. After this we must labour with all our might." "Never forget that the end of sermons is the salvation of the people."—Memoir and Remains of Rev. R. M. M'Cheyne, 1845, p. 283; a book which, I venture to say, should be carefully read by all young ministers.

† Acts xiv. 1.

Among the *latest* testimonies borne by him to this fact, I may quote the following passages of letters :—

"Nov. 25, 1842. To do much good, the essential truths must be made prominent,—ruin, redemption, regeneration."

"Feb. 2, 1843. Much success will depend on an animated, affectionate address to the experience and conscience, and keeping evangelical truths prominent."

In one of his earlier letters he says—"God works by means; and, under his blessing, it rests with you, whether the cause increases or languishes."

Often have I heard him in earnest, animated conversation with the students, urge upon them to combine what is accurate and judicious, with what is free and unpremeditated ; to unite in their sermons the mature product of patient thought and laborious study, with the warm and fresh effusions of natural feeling, the spontaneous outpourings of genuine emotion, excited at the time by the subject absorbing their own minds and the scene before them awakening the deepest sensibilities of their nature, and inspiring the liveliest concern for the salvation of their hearers. The perfection of preaching certainly consists in blending thought and feeling, so as both to communicate luminous instruction, and to produce vivid impression. My father, while he considered it an important part of a minister's work to inform the understanding, and to convince the judgment, regarded it as yet more his office, by a persuasive, pathetic address to touch the feelings, to move the passions, and thus, by the blessing of God, to warm and melt, to soften and subdue the heart—in short, to *persuade* men to be reconciled to God. In order to this, it is indispensable to let the hearers see that he is himself in earnest, and that his own heart is set on their salvation.

As a specimen of my father's mode and style of conversation with the students, I may insert the following extracts from a communication lately received from one of the most honoured and useful ministers of the present day, Rev. John Raven, of Dudley, who entered Highbury College in 1827.

"I know of no man to whom I owe so large a debt of gratitude as to your honoured and revered father. . . . . It was his influence that removed every obstacle, and opened before me an effectual door for preaching the everlasting Gospel. . . . . But this sense of obligation and esteem is due to him, not only on account of his effort to put me into the ministry, but also for his wise, kind, and salutary counsels on the great subjects of preaching and pastoral labour. He estimated ministerial qualifications and pulpit labours by their tendency *to usefulness.*

"I shall never forget my interview with him in his own house, at the close of my first session at Highbury College. After informing me that I was to preach for six Sabbaths of the vacation at Writtle, in Essex, he inquired whether any of the deacons or members of the church with which I was connected would hear me? On being answered in the affirmative, he said, 'Well, Sir, they will expect to discover some improvement after a year's study. They will make their observations; and recollect, Sir, that your conduct and preaching will either honour or disgrace your tutors and the college. People sometimes say, that young men are spoiled by our colleges; I want you to prove that this is *false.* You will not do this by *saying* so, but if you are more *humble, spiritual,* and *zealous,* and preach the Gospel more *fully, plainly,* and *faithfully,* than before you came to us, they will like our colleges, and support them. It is when young men are proud and conceited in their manner, and metaphysical in preaching, that people are prejudiced against our institutions. Don't you go and affect fine things. . . . . You are not to show off yourself, but to preach Christ and save souls. . . . Be energetic. . . . It is the duty of a man to understand his own profession, and it is your duty, (as a minister,) to understand the *Gospel.* Sinners are diseased; they are dying. You must go and tell them of the remedy—do it earnestly—urge them to receive it. Do not make them think, by a dull, lifeless style of preaching, that it is of little importance whether they believe in Jesus Christ or not. Tell them they are perishing—urge them to repent and believe immediately, and the more effectually you do this, the better people will think of you as a preacher. *Your work is to save souls.*'

"This conversation, and its illustrations, produced a lasting and powerful impression on my mind. On many subsequent occasions, he enforced the same sentiments, which I hope have had a profitable effect on my ministry. It is my decided opinion, that no man possessed more correct views than himself on the subject of preaching. His usefulness to the ministry in this particular, was incalculably great."

My father was jealous over his beloved college with a godly jealousy, lest the increased attention paid to classics and general literature, produced by its union with the London University, should lead to a diminution of that devotional fervour, zeal, and earnestness, which are requisite to constitute efficient preachers. Writing Dec. 22, 1841, to Mr. Raven, he says:—"I agree with you, that there may be some danger in our colleges, from the students seeking literary honours. I hope the Lord will preserve our young men. What influence I can exert shall be in favour of plain, faithful, lively, evangelical discourses. I shall always oppose reading sermons, and committing them verbatim to memory. We do want more of the spirit of George Whitefield."

Writing in 1838, he says:—"I am more than ever convinced of the importance of a minister's heart being in his work." In the same letter he writes: "Whitefield's Life, lately published,* will, I hope, stir up our ministers to greater spirituality of mind, and more active exertions to win souls to Christ." He always professed the greatest admiration of George Whitefield, whom he was taken, when an infant, to see while preaching at the Tabernacle, and whom he regarded as the prince of preachers. He has quoted the following words of Toplady, as expressive of his own opinion concerning that great "master of assemblies."

> "George Whitefield was the apostle of the English empire, in point of zeal for God, a long course of indefatigable and

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* By Rev. Robert Philip. Of this work my father purchased several copies, for the purpose of giving them to young ministers.

incessant labours, unparalleled disinterestedness, and astonishing, extensive usefulness. If the absolute command over the passions of immense auditories be the mark of a consummate orator, he was the greatest of the age. . . . . Mr. Whitefield made all modes of address bear upon solemn *effect*. For this, every accent of his voice spoke to the ear—every feature of his face, every motion of his hands, every gesture spoke to the eye—so that the most dissipated and thoughtless found their attention involuntarily fixed."

It might be supposed, from the language employed by some writers, that the oratorical power of Whitefield, like the corporeal might of Samson, was a secret which he had never divulged, and which could not be discovered. But where is the mystery of his unbounded popularity and success? "His word was with *power*." He spoke with prodigious energy, and with all the unequivocal signs and indications of intense feeling—strong emotion—impassioned earnestness—not even restraining tears. He threw his whole soul into every sermon which he preached, and almost into every word which he uttered, and he had a heart of fire ever kindled into fervour by burning zeal for God and ardent love to the souls of men. His was indeed a 'flaming tongue.'* The words of God in his mouth were fire;† who can wonder that he kindled a flame and made the hearts of his hearers to burn within them?

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* "It has been remarked, that those who *truly* preach the Gospel, do it with '*a flaming tongue*.'"—Life of Rev. John Wesley, by Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore, 1792, p. 488.

† Jeremiah v. 14; xxiii. 29.

My father was jealously apprehensive of mischievous results from some modern theories of doctrine. He thought there was danger of young ministers verging toward Pelagianism. He was not addicted to swear by the name of any master in theology. Although himself a moderate Calvinist, he was prepared to hold and embrace the whole truth of God contained in his word. Referring, in a letter dated Aug. 16, 1842, to a recent theological work, in which some new views were broached, he says:—"I fear Mr. ——— has bewildered many, and done harm. Why not take the whole word of God, without attempting to show how various passages harmonise?"

On one point, however, he quite agreed with the leading modern divines of the school of Calvin—Scott, Williams, &c. He believed that "Christ died for the sins of the whole world, and that none, to whom the Gospel is preached, fail of being saved by him, except by their own fault." He often remarked, 'God deals with men as rational, intelligent, and accountable creatures,'—and he thought with the Indian apostle, Eliot, that every man should be addressed by ministers as a rational being. "You are to state the Gospel to him, and urge the belief of it upon him, as one who is capable of thinking, reflecting, understanding, remembering, reasoning, and feeling. The Holy Spirit gains access to the heart, through the medium of the ear, the understanding, and the conscience. To these faculties you must address yourselves, unshackled by any false notions."

the brethren present, and Rev. Thomas James and Rev. Thomas Aveling, of Kingsland, were requested to act as secretaries to a committee appointed for the purpose of obtaining subscriptions, and deciding upon the particular memorial to be presented. The applications made by those gentlemen to the various ministers who regarded the college, of which my father had so long been treasurer and patron, as their *alma mater*, were promptly and cheerfully responded to. The sum of £220 was contributed, and a beautiful and elegant silver vase was executed.

On the evening of October 21st, a meeting was held at the Congregational Library, for the purpose of presenting this vase to my father The late Rev. Dr. Matheson, who was in the chair, introduced the business by remarking, that "they had assembled for the purpose of showing their grateful respect, esteem, reverence, and love for their venerated friend on his right, who had been raised up by the providence of God, at a critical period in the history of our country, and of the Congregational churches, to occupy an important station in their denomination, and to whom, instrumentally considered, many of the great religious movements of the present age might, in a large degree, be referred. Let them give the praise to God, who had raised him up, and had made him the instrument of sending forth so many labourers into his vineyard."

Mr. James stated, that the letters which he and Mr. Aveling had received, in reply to the applications made by them to the ministers, all expressed one common feeling of affectionate attachment to their highly esteemed friend, and the most unanimous and entire concurrence and participation in the object of that meeting.

The vase was presented by Rev. Dr. Morison. The following extracts from his address will show that the spirit of the meeting was to glorify God in raising up an instrument for his work :—

"The body of more than two hundred Christian ministers whom I have now the honour to represent, and many of whom are present, have been anxious for some time past, to express, in some suitable manner, to yourself, to the members of your family, to the churches with which they stand associated, and to the country at large, the deep sense they entertain of that grace which has been vouchsafed to you, as a devoted servant of the Christian church. They desire to magnify the grace of God in you; in that your time, your energy, and your fortune, have been consecrated, for a long series of years, to the cause of Christ. Many of us had the honour of your acquaintance and friendship, when in the full vigour of your days; and, from that time to the present, when age and infirmity are beginning to show themselves, we have beheld you pursuing one undeviating course of disinterested zeal for the glory of God and the good of souls. The steady attachment you have ever shown to the catholic principles of Congregational dissent, not more by the multiplication of its commodious sanctuaries, than by fostering a considerable portion of its rising ministry, has won for you our generous confidence, our enlightened respect, and I will add our warm gratitude. As ministers educated in a college of which, for forty-six years, you have been the faithful, active, and munificent treasurer, we have enjoyed ample opportunities of witnessing with our own eyes, how near its prosperity has lain to your heart. The interest you have ever taken in hopeful candidates for the Christian ministry; the anxiety with which you have watched over the students, during their preparatory course; the efforts you have made to introduce them, at the close of their studies, to suitable spheres of labour; and the many kind services you have rendered to not a few—I may say to all—amidst the [moral] dangers and difficulties of the pastoral office, entitle you to honourable distinction, and to some mark of esteem and gratitude, far more precious and abiding than the perishable memorial we are now about to present to you. . . . . . . Accept, then, dear Sir, this public testimony of the high esteem in which we hold your character—this memorial of the lasting benefits you have conferred upon an institution dear to all our hearts. Upon the pedestal of the vase will be found represented, in bas-relief, a front and back view of Highbury College; because we know that its walls were continually before you, and because we did not fail to remember that its best interests were deeply inscribed on your heart."

I cannot withhold from the reader my father's address on this occasion, which was read with much feeling:—

" My dear friends,—I appear before you in a very peculiar situation. The presentation of this beautiful testimonial is received by me with grateful feelings, which I cannot fully express. You have in this gift proved your attachment to a humble instrument placed by Divine Providence in a situation of honour and usefulness.

" When I reflect on my past life, I have every reason to say, ' Come, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.' I wish to look, through your kindness, to the great Author of every good and perfect gift. Peculiar circumstances often form characters, and create spheres of usefulness. I have to be thankful for pious parents. My father was a public-spirited Christian; he was the [principal] founder of this college; and at his decease, in March, 1794, I was chosen to be his successor in the office of treasurer. During my father's life, I felt much interested in the object, and when I undertook that office, I determined to devote myself to its duties; and to do this more effectually, I gave up my connexion with business in the year 1798. I can truly say the employment has been my delight.

"I have had interviews with various young men who needed a friend to advise and encourage them, with a view to being received into the college, some of whom, after leaving it, have risen to considerable eminence. With many of those who are now engaged in the work of the ministry I have still kept up a friendly intercourse, and have rejoiced in their success. Ye are my witnesses.

"I have also to be thankful that I have been spared so many years, to see the good seed spring up and produce an abundant harvest. Many new churches have been formed, and many vacant congregations have been supplied. The metropolis, where in former years a number of small chapels stood in very confined and obscure situations, now contains various large chapels, exposed to public view; and not only in London, but in almost all our large towns in the country, are to be found valuable ministers educated in this college. I cannot look round on you who are now present and think of many more who are absent, without exclaiming, 'What hath God wrought!'

"Among those who are engaged in foreign service, we are honoured by the labours of Dr. Morrison, who accomplished under one general and comprehensive scheme of ministerial education.

Would it not be greatly conducive to our true interest, to establish *two* theological institutions, comprehending most, if not the whole, of the present colleges, each having four or five professors in different departments, at which the students, having, *previously to their admission*, gone through a course of classical, mathematical, and general studies, should, for three years at least, give *undivided attention* to theology in all its various branches, and to those studies which are specifically adapted to qualify and prepare them for the appropriate duties of their office as *preachers* of the Gospel, and *pastors* of churches?*

It appears to me that the Congregational Dissenters in London, at least, are imperatively called upon to take measures for uniting two, if not more, of their colleges. The number of students for whom accommodation is provided at Homerton, Highbury, and Byng place, (Coward College,) is, I believe, little short of eighty; the present number of students scarcely exceeds fifty, and there is no prospect of any considerable increase.

The idea of uniting the institution at Highbury with the old college at Homerton was under consideration some time before my father's death. He was present and presided at a meeting of the committee of Highbury College, held April 7, 1843, when the subject was introduced, and I was happy to find that the proposal met with his assent and acquiescence.

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* The scheme proposed would not involve the sale and abandonment of *all* the other colleges. Some of them might be retained for the prosecution of introductory studies, under the direction of competent classical and general scholars.

At present these two (no longer rival) institutions have the same classical tutor; and I shall rejoice to see the day when a similar interchange may take place in the philosophical department, and when the venerable professor who has long, and with high reputation filled the theological chair at Homerton, may be associated with the distinguished oriental scholar who presides in theology at Highbury, both of them communicating their valuable instructions to an united body of students.

My father retained his confidence in the great principles of Nonconformity till the last. In several of his later letters he refers to the powerful influence exerted in small towns and agricultural districts to "crush dissent," by raising active opposition, partaking of the nature of persecution; "but" he says, (Oct. 10, 1840,) "as it rests on the Rock, and is guided by the New Testament, we must not fear the result." Again, June 25, 1842, "The truth will prevail, and Christ's kingdom must increase."

My father continued to feel a lively interest in public events, and he devoutly recognised the over-ruling providence of God in all political movements. Sept. 7, 1840, he writes, "France, Spain, and Portugal are all in confusion with changes and disaffection; and the question in the East is perplexed. Nothing is stable but *the Rock of ages.*"

Sept. 16, 1841, "We live in shaking times; what God will do by change of ministers, none can say." Although himself a landowner, his opinions and feelings were strongly opposed to legislative restrictions on the importation of corn. He was a strenuous advocate for the principle of unfettered international exchange, which he considered the real secret of commercial prosperity; and he would, I am sure, have rejoiced in the recognition of that principle by the British legislature which has recently taken place.

With truth might it be said of my father, "He brought forth fruit in old age." He did not "cease from yielding fruit" when his bodily strength began to abate, nor even when pain and suffering came upon him. He was permitted to attain the allotted period of human life—"threescore years and ten"—without any considerable degree of violent or protracted suffering, although he had for many years previously, been subject to an asthmatic affection, from which at times, particularly during the night and the early part of the morning, he suffered much distress and inconvenience.

With him old age was a season of continued exertion, not of indolent repose or contemplative retirement. He scarcely relaxed his labours and efforts in the great cause of human salvation, till he was in a considerable degree incapacitated by a painful and enfeebling disease; and, even when called to suffer, he did not abandon the post of active service.

The apostle James represents *patience* as the crowning grace of the Christian character, the exercise of which is essential to its perfection;[*] and works performed for the Saviour in circumstances requiring this virtue, obtain, there is reason to believe, a special share of his favourable notice. "I know," he says to the church of Thyatira, "I know thy works, and love, and service, and faith, and thy *patience*, and thy works, and the last to be more than the first."[†] In this respect my father's last works were, I doubt not, more than his first in the estimation of that Redeemer whom he served—being performed in a state of pain and weakness.

Until some time after he had completed his seventieth year, he felt but little of the infirmities attendant on old age. In July, 1839, he had a serious attack of illness; but he thus writes, August 23: "Through Divine mercy my health is recruited, but I must not work so much as I have done." He had often given intimations of the same kind to his correspondents in previous years; but he now felt compelled to decline accepting invitations to attend services in the country. His correspondence, however, which had for many years been extensive, rather increased than diminished. The first attack of that very painful disease which ultimately proved fatal was, I believe, in June, 1840. He thus writes to Rev. Joseph Johnson, October 10th: "Though I feel some effect of the attack which I had before midsummer, yet I am so well as to go through my usual work. I find the penny post increases my correspondence. . . . . What a mercy to be of any use in this wicked world, and to act with a single eye to the glory of God !"

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[*] James i. 4. See also 1 Peter v. 10.

[†] Rev. ii. 19.

In July, 1841, accompanied by the author and his younger sister, he visited Abney park Cemetery, not having previously apprised us of what proved to be his design. When we reached the ground, he informed us with perfect calmness and composure that he intended to purchase there "a possession of a burying place," and had come to select the spot. Having fixed upon a piece of ground, he soon after purchased it, and gave directions for the construction of a large vault. While this was being prepared, he paid a second visit to the ground, accompanied by my honoured mother, and descended into the narrow receptacle, as if to take possession of it in his own living person. Although he did not express any feeling of that kind, yet he acted like a man who had received the sentence of death in himself.

In July and August, 1841, he spent several weeks at Ryde, in the Isle of Wight. He much enjoyed the marine views and beautiful scenery of the neighbourhood, and attended with great pleasure the preaching of the late excellent and lamented pastor of the Independent church at that place, Rev. T. S. Guyer.

Toward the middle of September he had another and a more severe attack of his painful disease. Oct. 5, he writes—"I am now in affliction, and am obliged to have surgical aid. My reliance is on the atonement of Christ, and his willingness to save all who trust in him." Before the end of the year, however, he had so far recovered as to be able to resume his former engagements; but he was never again the active, vigorous man he had been. His nights of disturbed rest and interrupted sleep, owing to the frequent recurrence of violent pain, rendered it impossible for him to rise at his former early hour.* His visits also to his office (at the Congregational Library) were less regular, and his continuance there much shorter than formerly; but he wrote many letters at home, and almost to the last attended to the business connected with Highbury College. How firmly he continued to act from a sense of duty, and how willing he yet was to labour, will appear from the following passages in two letters, the first from Tunbridge Wells, dated August 23, 1842: "We are loth to leave this beautiful place, but must follow the leadings of Providence;" the other dated August 29: "I have been overcome with business since we returned home."

No murmuring word or whisper of complaint escaped his lips. The only expression employed by him in reference to his very painful disease, 'This is a suffering life,' was uttered in a calm, submissive tone. Both his faith and patience were in habitual exercise, and on one occasion, when reminded of the joyful prospect before him, he replied, "I can only look to *the great Sacrifice.*" October 27, 1842, he thus writes: "I cannot give you any better account of my health. Patience and submission must be exercised, with a stedfast faith on the Lamb of God." Thus did he continue "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of his faith."

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* It had been his invariable custom for many years to summon his family to morning worship precisely at eight o'clock. I believe the two bells which gave notice of this hour of prayer always rang while the clock was striking.

During the last few years of his life my father spent more time in reading than his numerous active engagements had for many preceding years allowed. He also resumed his former habit of entering passages in a memorandum-book. He perused with much pleasure several biographical works, among which I may mention the Life and Remains of the Rev. Robert Housman, A.B., of St. Anne's, Lancaster, a pious, evangelical, and truly liberal clergyman of the Church of England. In a letter to a minister, dated October 17, 1842, he says, "I have been reading the Life of the Rev. Theophilus Lessey, a very superior Wesleyan minister. He laments that the *atonement* and the work of *the Holy Spirit* are so much neglected."*

He made, also, several extracts from the memoir of a very popular and impressive Wesleyan preacher, Mr. William Dawson. Nor was his reading of this kind restricted to religious biographies. He also perused with much interest the memoir of Sir James Mackintosh. Among the last of his extracts are passages from "The Modern Pulpit," by Dr. Vaughan. The following may be quoted as confirmatory of the views and opinions which he had for many years inculcated :—

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* My father has quoted the following passage:—"He spoke on the importance of ministerial faithfulness, and on the necessity of giving a constant prominence to the efficacy of Christ's atoning sacrifice and the agency of the Holy Spirit on the hearts of men."

> "Let the system in our colleges be such as to make our students *scholars,* without making them *preachers*, and before long you may expect to see them dwindle rapidly from divines into private tutors or schoolmasters, or, perhaps, you will see numbers of them relinquish the ministry altogether, and give themselves wholly to literary or secular pursuits.
>
> "Let our students fail in the matter of elocution, and, so far as regards their ministry among Protestant Dissenters, it will matter little in what else they succeed.
>
> "It is as our colleges produce able preachers, that they will be sustained, and only as they so do.
>
> "Preaching should consist not in reading sermons, but in such extemporaneous delivery as obtains at the bar and in the senate."—pp. 154—156, 163.

But the book which my father most read,—which was, in fact, next to the Bible, his most constant companion, during the few months that elapsed between the date of its publication and his death,—was, 'The Notes of Fifty Sermons by Robert Hall, chiefly during the last five years of his ministry,' published by the Rev. Thomas Grinfield, M.A., an episcopal clergyman, who was his frequent auditor at Bristol.

These sermons exhibit not so much the fire of the great preacher's genius, as the glow and warmth of his piety, the ardour and elevation of his devotional feeling.

My father often expressed the great pleasure which he had derived from the perusal of these notes. I recollect particularly one Lord's-day morning he referred with deep interest to the last sermon in the volume, which he had been reading, entitled, 'The Heavenly Assembly,' from Matthew viii. 11, a subject entirely congenial with the state of his own mind, then advancing in preparation for that blessed world to which he was hastening. The last extracts which he entered, are from these sermons. They consist of the concluding remarks of the discourse on Humility, and may be quoted as expressive of his own feelings:—

> "In the heavenly world this grace will be perfect. The song of heaven is inspired by humility; the worshippers cry, 'Holy, holy, holy Lord God of hosts!' They abase themselves in the dust, and glorify only God and the Lamb. This is the spirit of the church on earth, the spirit of the church in heaven; and just in proportion as we possess this spirit, we are prepared to serve God here, and to enjoy his glory for ever."—pp. 446, 447.

The following passage he transcribed in the postscript of a letter to a young minister in the country:—

> "If we abandon no luxury, if we sacrifice no sensual indulgence, if we never deny ourselves that we may bless others, if

we only bestow absolute superfluities upon the cause of God and the claims of the destitute, we neither rise to the elevation of evangelical beneficence, nor do what is required for the mortification of inordinate affection."

Toward the end of May, 1843, my father appeared for the last time in a public capacity, as chairman of a meeting, held in Union Chapel, Islington, for the purpose of taking measures to oppose the passing of Sir James Graham's Education Bill, which he described as an "unjust, unconstitutional, and oppressive measure." He expressed his opinion very decidedly that no forcible means should be employed to compel parents to send their children to school, but that education should be perfectly free. He also spoke plainly and strongly in reference to the Church Catechism, as in his judgment teaching children to say what is false—that they were born again of the Spirit when baptized—whereas baptism communicates no grace, or spiritual influence.* He declared his great objection to the Church of England as based on the supposition that all are made Christians in baptism, the subsequent services at confirmation and burial proceeding on the same false and dangerous assumption; so that the church "knows nothing of sinners," except flagrant and notorious offenders.

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* My father was always accustomed to express himself in terms of strong and, I think, just dislike of the Church Catechism, on account of the highly erroneous teaching it contained; but that this did not arise from prejudice will appear from the terms in which he speaks of the catechism of another religious body. In October, 1842, he was requested to contribute to a new school-room, erected by the teachers of the Wesleyan Sunday-school at Newmarket. He expressed a wish to see the catechism taught in the school. The first part of the Conference Catechism was forwarded to him, after which he wrote expressing his approbation of it, and willingness to contribute, which he did, "feeling the importance of scriptural education."

The last time he attended public worship was at Union Chapel, on Lord's-day evening, May 28th, when Rev. Henry Cresswell, of Canterbury, preached from Rom. viii. 32, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all," &c. After the service, he said to Mr. Cresswell, who spoke to him on retiring from the chapel, "You have given us the great truths,"—thus bearing his last testimony to the importance of ministers introducing the essential doctrines of the Gospel into all their sermons.

A few weeks previously to his death, a meeting was held in Exeter Hall, for the purpose of promoting a more intimate and visible union among the various denominations of evangelical Christians, holding and maintaining the great cardinal doctrines of the Bible. One of the most active promoters of that meeting (Rev. James Sherman, of Surrey Chapel,) called upon my father on the evening of the day preceding the meeting, to request that he would, if possible, be present on the occasion. He felt compelled to decline this on account of his increasing physical infirmities, but expressed himself warmly and strongly in favour of the object.

His name appeared in the list of upwards of a hundred names (chiefly of ministers belonging to various denominations) appended to a printed paper, commencing with these words:—

"The undersigned, fervently desiring the increase and manifestation of union among Christians, invite with most respectful earnestness and affection, the attendance of all ministers and members of evangelical churches favourable to the object, at a public meeting for promoting such union, to be held in the great room, Exeter Hall, on Thursday, June 1st, 1843."

The design of this meeting was in full accordance with my father's cherished sentiments. He had copied the following passage some years before: "Oh, what a spectacle does this kingdom now present (1837) of glory on the one hand, and disgrace on the other!—All parties wrangling with each other, yet all struggling for the conversion of the world; retiring from the scenes of their common warfare, to pursue, each in his private sphere, the works of charity and peace."

It is highly gratifying to me, that I am able to record the interest manifested and expressed by my father in this great object, the visible and evident union of believers—of all who, being by faith united to the Head, Jesus Christ, are members of that true catholic church, which is his body. He had perhaps, in former years, on some occasions, amidst the excitement of public meetings, used strong expressions, which those who make a man an offender for a word, might deem uncharitable, but he had always been a truly catholic Christian. He was indeed too large-minded and large-hearted to be a bigot. He embraced in his comprehensive charity "the whole household of faith," and could utter from the heart the apostolical prayer, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

But as he advanced in life, and came into closer union with the general assembly and church of the firstborn, and especially as the time approached when he should be permitted to mingle with the spirits of the just made perfect—the love which he had to all the saints assumed a deeper tone and a warmer glow. He sympathised more earnestly with the last intercessory prayer of our Divine Lord, presented to his heavenly Father, on behalf of his apostles, and of all who should to the end of time believe on him through their word, that they all might be visibly and cordially one, that the world might know and believe that the Father had sent him on the great errand of that world's salvation,—that so the church, attaining at length to complete unity, might also arrive at mature strength and perfect stature.

The reader will be gratified by Mr. Sherman's account of the interview above referred to:—

"I had the pleasure of calling on your father a short time previous to his death. The subject of Christian union, in connexion with the public meeting to be held on the subject, was introduced. He expressed great pleasure at the prospect of any effort being made towards bringing Christians closer together. His eyes brightened as he emphatically uttered, 'And why should we not unite? Baptists and Independents are one in everything except a single question; and the points of disagreement in other sections of the church are so few, and the points of agreement so many, that I think the latter are as ninety to ten of the former. As we come nearer to the eternal world we cling more to the great things on which we are agreed, and want to know and feel less about denominational differences. I hope God will bless your efforts. I have a little fear about the members of the Established Church. Can they unite? But I have lived to see such changes, that even that barrier may be removed.'"

I may also mention that the last petition which I heard my father offer, was toward the conclusion of his domestic worship the same evening—that the special presence and blessing of God might be enjoyed at the meeting to be held on the following day.

So long before as October 2, 1833, my father wrote to one of his correspondents, "I wish we had more of the temper manifested by the great Howe, a quotation from whom I sent to the Evangelical Magazine, which is inserted this month." The passage from Howe's Sermon preached on the Restoration of Peace in 1697, is as follows:—

"When once we shall have learned to distinguish between the *essentials* of Christianity and accidental appendages, and between accidents of Christ's appointing and of our devising, and to dread the affixing of our own devices to so sacred an institution; . . . . when we shall have learned not only not to add inventions of our own to that sacred frame, but much more not to presume to insert them into the order of essentials or necessaries, and treat men as no Christians for wanting them; when the Gospel shall have its liberty to the utmost ends of the earth; when the regenerating Spirit shall go forth with it, and propagate a Divine and Godlike nature everywhere among men; when regeneration shall be understood to signify the communicating of such a nature and such dispositions to men; when the weight of such words comes to be apprehended, '*He that loveth not his brother abideth in death,*'—1 John iii. 14; when to be born of God ceases to signify with us, being proselyted to this or that church formed and distinguished by human device; when religious pretences cease to serve political purposes; when the interest of a party ceases to weigh more with us than the whole Christian interest; when sincerity shall be thought the noblest embellishment of a Christian; when the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, &c.—then will '*our peace be as a river.*'"

The following extracts from notes addressed to an old friend and correspondent, the late Rev. Joseph Johnson, will be read with interest, as exhibiting the state of my father's mind during the last months of his life:—

"Oct. 19, 1842.—I hope this will find you in better health, and able to go through your delightful work. My advanced age feels the attendant infirmities, and my active work is over. Oh to be prepared for heaven! If you can spare a little help for our college (in debt £700) we shall be glad to receive it."

"December 23, 1842.—I thank you for your kind, affectionate letter. We have long worked together in the best of causes, and must soon hope to enjoy the heavenly rest."

"May 27, 1843.—I was sorry to learn that your state of health had induced you to resign your pastoral charge. You and I must now be submissive in bearing the infirmities of advanced age. God must be our trust, who has given us many exceeding great and precious promises. I want greater love to Him who gave his life for us.

"I hope your friends will be directed in the choice of a pastor. Great care should be taken. . . . . . I shall be ready to give an account of any ministers that may be introduced, whom I know."

What may be called my father's *last* illness commenced on June 1st. It was preceded by a sudden prostration of strength. On the 2nd, he penned, evidently with a tremulous hand, a short note to Mr. Johnson, (probably the last letter ever written by him) in which he mentions a young minister of whom he gave a favourable report; adding, however, in a postscript, "Perhaps he wants more *affection*"—showing that the writer was the same man and of the same mind in the near approach of death. On Lord's-day the 4th, he heard read with much pleasure a sermon by the late Rev. Samuel Lavington, of Bideford, from Job v. 26, "Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in, in his season." Mr. Lavington's sermons had long been great favourites with him, and in his youth he had transcribed several of those which have since been printed.* On the 5th, he came down stairs for the last time, and dined with some members of his family, but soon withdrew to another room, where he made a last effort, and settled some worldly affairs—ordering letters and bills to be brought to him—tearing up a large number of the former, and providing the means for payment of the latter. He also arranged some business connected with the approaching anniversary of Highbury College. He evidently wished to bring all temporal concerns to a speedy close, being apprehensive that the time of his departure was at hand.

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* See p. 84, ante.

On the 7th of June he received a letter from a lady requesting him to contribute towards a debt owing to the estate of her deceased husband for money advanced to the chapel at Newark, to which he had in previous years contributed most liberally. He had some months before promised £10, provided other contributions could be obtained. Although this condition had not been performed, yet upon receiving this second application, he filled up a draft upon his bankers, with his own hand, for £10, and directed one of my sisters, who was then with him, to write a letter and enclose it; thus crowning the liberal doings of a long life with a last act of generosity, performed on his death-bed.

During the whole of this last illness, although his sufferings were very great, yet so long as consciousness remained he was calm and composed—his mind being kept in perfect peace, stayed on that God in whom he had long trusted. He also expressed much thankfulness for little acts of service performed for him, which he regarded as acts of kindness.

Portions of Scripture, sermons, and hymns, generally selected by himself, were read to him by the faithful female servant who attended him. Of the former he expressed much pleasure in hearing several from the excellent practical sermons of the Rev. Charles Bradley, of Clapham. Several of the hymns read to him from his own little volume, also afforded him much comfort and refreshment. After he became unable to leave his bed, his pain so much increased that he could not generally bear to hear reading; but one morning he requested that the 25th Psalm might be read to him. He said that he found it a good word; and a hymn having been read, the servant asked, "Are you in pain now, Sir?" He replied, "Yes; but there will be no more pain in heaven; it is a great mercy to be able to look to the end with a good hope through grace."

On Lord's-day, June 11th, he was in a very happy frame of mind, and manifested that humility and self-abasement before God, for which he had been distinguished. Another of his faithful servants who waited upon him that day, said to him, "There will no doubt be many prayers offered up for you, Sir, to-day." He replied—"Yes, probably there will—it is very kind of them to think of me, for I am most unworthy to be remembered in their prayers. By the grace of God I am what I am." He was much affected, and immediately after repeated with great feeling that verse of a well-known hymn which expressed his dying experience, that Christ is All.

> "Other refuge have I none,
> Hangs my helpless soul on thee,
> Leave, ah! leave me not alone,
> Still support and comfort me."

Being reduced to a state of extreme debility, he was unable after this day to hold much communication with those around him. On the morning of the 14th, on going to his bed-side, he warmly took my hand; I said to him, referring to Psalm cxvi. 6, "My dear father, you are brought very low, but God will help you." He instantly replied, quoting the words of Samuel, 1 Sam. vii. 12, "Hitherto he hath helped me"—thus erecting on his death-bed, amidst the helpless infirmity of his animal nature, his last Ebenezer, his dying testimony to the faithfulness of that God who was a very present help, even when heart and flesh were failing, and to whom he could even then look, as the strength of his heart, and his portion for ever. Having obtained help of God, he had continued unto this day, nearly the last day of life; and the God whom he had long served in health and vigour, did not forsake him now that his strength was altogether failing. He who had been the guide of his youth, continued his guide even unto death, and his God for ever and ever.

On the day following, the pain ceased—mortification having commenced. Of this, I apprehend, he was aware. When I inquired how he felt, on my first seeing him after this fatal symptom had supervened, he made some remark, the meaning of which I did not exactly perceive at the time; but I have since been led to suppose that he meant it as an intimation that now the struggle with pain was over, and the bitterness of death had ceased. He soon after sank into a state of lethargic torpor, in which he continued for some days, with only occasional, but very transient intervals of apparent consciousness. I have therefore no death-bed sayings to record; but happily we needed no solemn testimony, or renewed assurance from his dying lips, to the truth and efficacy of those evangelical doctrines and principles to which his whole life had borne witness.

During the two or three last days, although he continued with us, we were withdrawn from all sensible communication with him, and to all appearance he was, except during momentary intervals, cut off from all communication with the external world. But although we could hold no farther intercourse with our beloved and venerated relative, he was not *alone;* for his heavenly Father was with him. Underneath him, even while "the outward man was perishing," were the everlasting arms. He died in faith. The life which he lived in the flesh had been by faith in the Son of God, who loved him and gave himself for him, and he died a believer in Jesus.

My beloved and venerated father quietly fell asleep in Jesus, and entered into his heavenly rest, shortly after midnight, June 17th, 1843.

It was a characteristic circumstance indicative of his aversion to pomp and parade, that he expressed in a private memorandum his wish that all ostentatious display should be avoided at the interment of his remains. Nothing can be more absurd than for survivors to celebrate the triumph of the last enemy over a fellow-mortal, howsoever beloved and honoured, by a gloomy mock-pageant. My father gave explicit directions that the carriages hired to convey the mourners should be drawn by only two horses, and that no relatives farther removed than nephews should be invited to attend.

A wish having been expressed by the directors of the London Missionary Society that a deputation from their body should attend the funeral, as a token of their respect to the memory of their deceased treasurer, several ministers and other gentlemen were present as representatives of the board. The tutors, and a deputation from the committee of Highbury College, also attended, and the whole body of students joined the procession at the ground. After prayer and reading portions of Scripture by Rev. J. H. Godwin, resident tutor, an appropriate address was delivered in the cemetery chapel, by Rev. Dr. Henderson, theological tutor in Highbury College. After the interment, a short address was delivered by Rev. Arthur Tidman, foreign secretary of the London Missionary Society, and prayer offered by Rev. Thomas Lewis, minister of Union Chapel, Islington. The sermon of Dr. Leifchild, already referred to, was delivered on the morning of the Lord's-day following, at Craven Chapel. Several other sermons commemorative of my father's honourable and useful career were delivered by ministers in London and various parts of the country.

A neat tomb, constructed of Portland stone, has been placed over the vault, bearing in front the following inscription :—

BENEATH THIS TOMB,

AWAITING THE RESURRECTION OF THE JUST,

REST THE MORTAL REMAINS OF

THOMAS WILSON, ESQ.,

TREASURER OF HIGHBURY COLLEGE,

OF WHICH INSTITUTION

HE WAS FOR NEARLY FIFTY YEARS

THE MUNIFICENT AND INDEFATIGABLE PATRON.

HE DEVOTED HIS TIME, STRENGTH, AND PROPERTY

TO THE HIGHEST OBJECT,

THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE GLORY OF GOD

IN THE SALVATION OF THE SOULS OF MEN,

THROUGH FAITH IN THE PROPITIATORY SACRIFICE

OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST;

AND AFTER A LIFE

OF DISTINGUISHED GENEROSITY,

UNWEARIED ZEAL, AND EXTENSIVE USEFULNESS,

FELL ASLEEP IN JESUS, JUNE 17TH, 1843,

IN THE 79TH YEAR OF HIS AGE.

"BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHO DIE IN THE LORD, THAT THEY MAY REST FROM THEIR LABOURS, AND THEIR WORKS DO FOLLOW THEM."

REV. XIV. 13.

I consider it due to my father's memory, to state that the reports circulated shortly after his decease, as to the amount of property left by him, were *exceedingly exaggerated.* He would, *I know*, have considered it a reproach and dishonour, if it could have been said with truth, that he had quitted this world immensely rich.* If ever there was a man

> "Unbit by rage canine of dying rich,"

my father was one who escaped that frenzy.

He did not bequeath a large amount to religious and charitable institutions. This was, I believe, the result of deliberate conviction, and in accordance with a principle on which he had acted through life, that his own hands should be the distributors of his religious bounty. He had for many years before his death considered it his duty to devise liberal things, and "to be his own executor," and therefore did not feel that *he* was under obligation to distribute largely by *will*, of that which, at the moment of his decease, ceased to be his own.† In compliance, however, with his request, £100 were paid within six months after his decease to each of the following societies—Highbury College, London Missionary Society, Colonial Missionary Society, and Associate Fund for the assistance of poor ministers. He also requested that £100 Long Annuities might be transferred into the names of the trustees of Highbury College, toward its support. This was done, and subsequently, by order of the committee, these long annuities were sold, and £3 per cent stock was purchased; which, with some addition by the author,—making the amount invested £1200—will be permanently reserved as a double scholarship.*

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* "Oh the scandal of dying very rich, in our day especially, and when importuned by thousands of calls from perishing souls!"—Jubilee Services of the London Missionary Society, 1844. (Sermon by Rev. William Jay.) p. 43.

† "Defer not charities till death; for certainly if a man weigh it rightly, he that doth so, is liberal rather of another man's than of his own."—Bacon's Essays.

"Those who defer their gifts to their death-bed, do as good as say, 'Lord, I will give thee something when I can keep it no longer.' Happy is the man who is his own executor!"—Bishop Hall.

Kind letters expressive of condolence and sympathy were sent to my honoured mother, and the other members of the bereaved family, by the committees of various institutions with which my father had been connected, particularly the London Missionary Society, the Religious Tract Society, and Highbury College.† The following resolutions of the committee of the last-named institution are entitled to a place in this memoir:—

"The Committee of Highbury College desire to record the sentiments of esteem and gratitude which they feel for the memory of their late Treasurer, Thomas Wilson, Esq., and their conviction of the great value of those services, which, through the grace of God, he was enabled to render to this institution. In early life his services began, and they were continued without interruption to old age. Besides the duties of treasurer of the college, which he ever discharged with exemplary diligence, correctness, and liberality, he laboured in every possible way to advance its prosperity.

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* Another scholarship of £600 has been founded by Rev. Thomas Weaver, of Shrewsbury, from a fund placed at his disposal by the late Mr. Joseph Parry of that place. These sums are appropriated in aid of the general funds of the institution, toward the maintenance and support of students.

† In the vote of the committee of the Religious Tract Society, it is stated, that my father "appears to have been the *first* contributor to its funds, and remained till the close of life one of its liberal and attached friends."

"By his munificent donations and indefatigable efforts, he secured the erection of the present college. By inquiries in various parts of the country, he brought forth to notice the talents of many who have become distinguished ministers of the Gospel of Christ. By his kind and judicious advice, he aided those who were preparing for the ministry, and by his generous contributions, he lessened the burdens and forwarded the efforts of those who were engaged in its arduous duties. He was ever ready to receive with Christian courtesy the many applications which were made to him for counsel and assistance; and by a most extensive correspondence, he sought to excite others to that zeal for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ which his own example displayed.

"Ever present at all the meetings of the various committees, he rendered the most efficient aid, by his knowledge of character, his just appreciation of the great qualifications for ministerial usefulness, and his excellent judgment on all practical matters.

"His watchful care extended to all the concerns of the college, internal and external. Those who co-operated with him, were excited by his diligence to more vigorous exertions, and by his devotedness to the cause of Christ, were animated to the more complete discharge of their several duties. If a long life of eminent piety, of constant activity in his Master's service, of extensive and permanent usefulness;—if these have ever made the memory of the servants of Christ to be blessed, to our departed friend this honour has been given. And while the committee, thankful that so long he was spared to this institution and to the church on earth, mourn with his bereaved family that at last he has been removed from them ; they would also rejoice, that he experienced himself so much of the power of the truth and grace of Christ, and contributed so much to extend to others the blessings of salvation.

"The committee would beg to express to the widow and children of their esteemed and beloved friend, every sentiment of Christian sympathy ; and would pray that all grace and consolation may be granted to them from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord."

At the annual meeting of the subscribers to Highbury College, held June 28, 1843, W. A. Hankey, Esq., in the chair, the following resolutions were passed :—

"That this meeting, considering the extraordinary services, which, during nearly half a century, were rendered to this institution by the late revered and lamented Treasurer, cannot but deplore the loss which it has sustained by his death ; and, while cherishing the grateful remembrance of his devotedness to the cause of Christ, and of his extensive usefulness, would pray that there may never be wanting others to carry on the work to which his life was consecrated, now that he has ceased from his labours and entered into rest.

"That the present state of the church of Christ in this country renders it especially necessary, that by the voluntary contributions of Christians, a sufficient provision should be made for the education of pious young men for the work of the ministry ; and that it is of peculiar importance at this time, that some measures should be adopted to awaken in the Congregational churches, a stronger concern for the prosperity of this and of similar institutions."

At my father's death there was a balance of £1205 due to him from Highbury College. This sum the meeting determined should not be permitted to pass to his successor in office. It was accordingly refunded, partly by contributions raised in consequence of a special appeal, and partly by sale of stock.

The following lines, written on the death of my father by the Rev. Dr. Raffles, will form an appropriate close to this narrative :—

"Faithful servant! thou hast done
All the work thy Lord assigned;
With thy talents every one,
Thou hast wrought with willing mind,
And the profit they have made
At thy Master's feet is laid.

Valiant soldier! thou hast fought,
And the battle strife is o'er,
Now the wreath of victory 's wrought,
Thou shalt agonise no more;
Lo! the angelic harps resound
For another conqueror crowned!

Weary pilgrim! thou dost rest;
Calm and peaceful be thy bed,
In the grave that Jesus blessed,
Slumber with thy dying Head!
Dead with Him, with Him arise,
Claim thy mansion in the skies.

Like the shining light thy path,
Brighter and still brighter grew;
Scattered far the clouds of wrath,
Heaven's clear sunshine full in view,
Thou the chequered path hast trod,
Up to glory—up to God!

CONCLUSION.

ALTHOUGH I feel compelled to suppress many of the remarks which I had prepared concerning my father's character, on account of the unexpected length to which this work has extended, I cannot allow myself to bring it to a conclusion without a few abbreviated hints.

A short notice may be proper concerning his more private and domestic character.

He "showed piety at home." His was a domestic religion. He ruled well his own house, maintaining order and regularity. But he ruled by love and kindness. His piety would sustain the two tests laid down in two of his last extracts.

"A question was once asked—whether a certain person was a good man? The reply was, 'I know not—*I never lived with him.*' Every man is really, what he is relatively."

"One of Lavater's aphorisms on man—'If without living with him, or studying him, you would know a man at once, observe how he acts and speaks towards his inferiors.' "

Tried by these tests, my father's religious character appeared to great advantage. Not only did he "forbear threatening"—he was always kind, gentle, and affable to his domestics. They never received a hard or harsh word from him. He did not "mind high things, but condescended to men of low estate," and when in the country, often visited the cottages of the poor, and conversed freely and familiarly with their inmates, especially on religious topics.

In his journeys, when staying at the houses of friends, his whole manner and demeanour was quiet and gentle. His rule was, to give as little trouble to other persons, even to servants, as possible.

He was not only exemplary as a master, but also as a husband and a father. Although not remarkable for tenderness of *manner*, or a strongly affectionate tone, he was uniformly kind and gentle in word and action.

He retained a patriarchal simplicity to the last, avoiding all pompous display and ostentatious parade. On my grandmother's death (1816) he removed to Highbury place, but his establishment continued as before—plain and inexpensive. He did not keep a sumptuous table, or live in luxury and splendour.*

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* Sept. 30, 1836, he thus writes to a gentleman in Norfolk, who was expecting him as a guest—"I will just say, that the plainest fare suits me best."

He had a great dislike to large parties, and visits protracted to a late hour. Although he did not scruple freely to use with temperance and thankfulness the gifts of God's providential bounty, yet "his moderation was known unto all" who had opportunities of seeing and observing him. He attained the happy mean betwixt ascetical mortification on the one hand, and luxurious self-indulgence on the other. Of him it might be said, as of the primitive disciples—he "ate his meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God."

I need scarcely say that he practised hospitality, or that he entertained his friends in a generous manner; but although he did not adopt the frigid and jejune interpretation given by several commentators, ancient and modern, to our Lord's words to Martha, when cumbered with much serving—"one thing is needful," —'one dish is enough,'[*] yet I have not unfrequently heard him express his opinion, that even when many guests are expected, the table should not be *loaded* with dishes; and he never allowed to be placed upon it, either a great variety, or very costly kinds of wine.

I cannot affirm that his speech was "*always* with grace," seasoned with the salt of heavenly wisdom—that every word he uttered was good, tending directly to useful instruction, and even to spiritual edification;

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[*] Bishop Pearce thus paraphrases this passage (Luke x. 41, 42)— "Thou art full of anxious cares, and therefore troubled and hurried in providing many dishes for my meal; and there is need of one thing only; *i. e.* of one dish only for me to eat of."—Commentary, with Notes on the Four Evangelists, 4to. 1777, p. 368.

but I may say with truth, that it was free from levity, and from that trifling insignificance which renders the oral communication, even of professed Christians, too generally vain and unprofitable.

He was a very lively and agreeable companion, and was accustomed to relate facts and anecdotes of a humorous nature, of which he possessed a considerable store, always adapting the action to the word, and sometimes performing the part represented, with much dramatic effect. I believe, indeed, that he possessed considerable power of this kind. He could, in detailing the narrations of sacred history, paint the scene and describe the minute circumstances in so lively and vivid a manner, as to excite a deep interest in the minds of children.

He did not refrain from laughter, — even loud laughter, but his was not

> "The loud laugh that speaks the vacant mind,"

but that of a serious, earnest man, who knew how to relax at the proper season.

The subjects of conversation at his table were usually of a nature that showed how much his heart was set upon the work of the Lord. There might be little of sparkling wit, or eloquent discourse; but there was much of what tended to general usefulness, as well as to individual profit. Our Lord has left his followers, in this respect, as in every other, an example. Into his lips grace was poured, and he poured it forth in healthful streams. Not one idle, vain, or foolish word ever proceeded out of his mouth. Every utterance of his lips was replete with useful instruction, or salutary admonition, directly tending to the good of men, and the glory of his heavenly Father. After his resurrection, he ceased indeed to be a *public* teacher, or to mingle in general society, but reserved his personal presence and intercourse for "chosen witnesses who did eat and drink with him; by whom he was seen forty days, *speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.*"

In his family prayers, my father was in the habit of using scriptural petitions. Some of these are still fresh in my recollection. I will mention two, which were of frequent recurrence. "Let integrity and uprightness preserve us."* "May we be Israelites indeed, in whom is no guile."† These prayers were answered in him, and the graces of the Christian character thus presented as objects of desire before God, were in his life presented before men in practical manifestation.

He was a direct, upright, and truthful man, of transparent candour, and manifest honesty. "In simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, he had his conversation in the world." In the expression of his thoughts, feelings, and opinions, he was always frank, open, and ingenuous, and there was an air of sincerity pervading all he did and said. Perhaps this excellence was not unattended with a defect. His habit of plain speaking might sometimes lead him, when he felt strongly, to use unduly strong language in giving expression to his feelings. Although I believe his *meaning* was always kind, yet there was, perhaps, occasionally, a degree of bluntness, and *apparent* harshness in his mode of speaking. He did not at all times completely succeed in combining the *suaviter in modo* with the *fortiter in re.* Some persons appear to regard these qualities as incompatible, but I believe it is quite possible to combine the plain, honest, and faithful expression of opinion and feeling, with a bland, conciliatory tone and manner. Not to mention the great Teacher and Example—how admirably were these two qualities, gentleness and fidelity, blended and harmonised in the apostle Paul! I feel it right, however, to add, that my father, in his ordinary communications, spoke the truth *in love*, and exhibited the courtesies of a Christian gentleman.

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* In a letter dated Dec. 28, 1840, he says, "I endeavour to keep this motto constantly in view, 'Let integrity and uprightness preserve me.'"

† In quoting this commendation of Nathanael, he always inserted the word 'allowed' before 'guile,' as Doddridge does in his Rise and Progress of Religion, and Whitefield in his Letters.

"Many persons," says Dr. Leifchild, "have expressed their surprise at the singular combination which appeared in his character, of meekness with activity, and gentleness with zeal." Although my father's natural temperament was, as I believe, quick and excitable,* yet he did manifest in his ordinary bearing, much of equanimity and freedom from perturbation. Certainly his zeal was eminently calm and quiet, not the effect of animal excitement or passionate emotion, but the result of deliberate conviction, and firm, steady principle, therefore constant and uniform. It was a deeply-seated, inward fire, ever burning with an intense and equable glow—but not emitting much visible flame, and attended with no noise. He was "fervent in *the spirit*." He had a zealous *mind.* His zeal exhibited itself in action. He was "zealous of *good works*." Such is the character of angelical zeal. Those celestial ministers, being in their swiftness, winds, and in their ceaseless activity, flames of fire, are continually employed in doing Jehovah's pleasure, and obeying the voice of his word. True Christian zeal is a practical principle, not expending itself in fervent speech, much less evaporating in warm but idle wishes; but urging forward in a course of strenuous, active service. My father attained, in a considerable degree, that which the excellent Henry Martyn laboured after, "a calm and sober devotedness to God," impelling him to incessant action.*

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* I cannot agree with Dr. Leifchild, that his "temperament was of the phlegmatic order," (Funeral Sermon, p. 31) although there might be some indications that would lead to that conclusion. He was always

I need not speak of my father as a *giver.* His own works, as recorded in the preceding pages, praise him. He was not only a liberal but a prompt and

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lively and earnest, and possessed much of the *vivida vis animi.* His feelings were, I believe, naturally strong, although he had, probably by a conscientious effort, brought them under control.

* "The rest of the evening I continued in a very ardent frame; but in private I was taught, by former experience, to labour after a calm and sober devotedness to God, and that my fervour might show itself in *a steady course of action*."—Memoir of Rev. Henry Martyn, B.D., p. 98.

cheerful giver. What he gave was greatly increased in value by its being given at once and in such a manner as to operate as an example to others. He often thus doubled his contribution, on the principle, *bis dat qui cito dat.* When an application was made to him for any object which he thought had a just claim upon him, he was ready and forward to contribute with liberality, and, I believe, felt real pleasure in so doing.

Dr. Leifchild has intimated that "applications for the relief of mere temporal necessities met with but limited encouragement from him." This is true (as it is meant) only in a comparative sense. He did not forget or lose sight of the temporal wants and bodily woes of men, in the superior claims upon his regard of their deeper and more urgent spiritual necessities.

Richard Baxter, in his Christian Directory, says:—

> "Prudence is exceedingly necessary in doing good; . . . . therefore labour much for wisdom.
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> "In doing good, prefer the souls of men before the body, *cæteris paribus.* 'To convert a sinner from the error of his way, is to save a soul from death, and to cover a multitude of sins,'—James v. 20; and this is greater than to give a man an alms. As cruelty to souls is the most heinous cruelty, (as persecutors and soul-betraying pastors will one day know to their remediless woe,) so mercy to *souls* is the greatest mercy.
>
> "Prefer a durable good that will extend to posterity, before a short and transitory good. As to build an almshouse is a greater work than to give an alms; and to erect a school than to teach a scholar; so *to promote the settlement of the Gospel and a faithful ministry, is the greatest of all,* as tending to the good of many, even to their everlasting good."—p. 131.

The last sentence precisely expresses my father's views and sentiments. He felt that he was called to contribute largely to this *greatest of all good works;* and although he did not decline contributing to objects tending to the temporal good of his fellow-men, he felt not the same obligation to contribute *with equal liberality* to these, as to objects directly adapted to promote their spiritual and everlasting welfare, especially as he knew that many will contribute to relieve the bodies of men who have no sympathy for their perishing souls.

He did not, however, withhold from the poor, the widow, the fatherless, and was a generous friend to poor ministers, their widows and orphans. He was a founder of one Orphan Asylum in the neighbourhood of London, of the Associate Fund for the relief of poor dissenting ministers, and of the Congregational School for the education of their children.

I am not aware that my father was accustomed, at least in the later years of his life, to set apart any fixed proportion of his income as a reserve appropriated to purposes of Christian beneficence. I rather think that he acted in the spirit of that precept,

> "Give what thou *canst*—high Heaven rejects the lore
> Of nicely calculated less or more."[*]

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[*] I consider it proper to mention what has been communicated to me on this point. A minister who entered Hoxton Academy in 1802, states, that, while he was a student there, my father mentioned that he was then in the habit of giving *a third* of his income. Another minister

As my father's character affords a striking instance of unity and singleness of purpose, so his life furnishes abundant proof of what extensive good may result from individual effort—how much may be done by one man devoting himself to one thing—consecrating all his energies to one object. This lesson is rendered the more impressive from the fact, that my father possessed no brilliant qualities of any kind—neither splendid talents nor profound acquirements. If, however, he did not possess the dazzling and showy qualities, neither was he destitute of the more sterling, solid, and valuable endowments—a vigorous understanding, strong good sense, a sound judgment, considerable penetration, and great practical wisdom.* He possessed an eminently *sound* mind, distinguished for sobriety. Above all, he was firm, determined, and decisive in purpose, prompt, vigorous, and persevering in execution—resolute in will, and energetic in action. His natural endowments admirably fitted him for the work assigned to him, and that work was, in some respects, peculiar, and exclusively his own.

My father is justly entitled to be ranked among

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informs me of having heard a report, which he is not able to trace to its author, that later in life my father gave *half* his income. I may add, that when large advances were required for particular objects, he afterward replaced such portion of his capital as might have been withdrawn.

* I cannot admit the correctness of a statement made by the writer of a brief memoir of my father in the Evangelical Magazine for November, 1843, that "designing persons could easily practise upon him." He was too shrewd a man, and possessed too keen an insight into character, to be *easily* imposed upon.

persons eminent for that decision which leads a man, having once deliberately formed a great and good purpose, to make it the business of his life to "perform the doing thereof." In speaking of him in this view, I cannot do better than adopt the language (slightly transposed) of a writer who with admirable fidelity and force has delineated this noble attribute of character—the late John Foster:—

> "The great cause which was so languid a thing in the hands of many of its advocates, assumed in his administrations an unmitigable urgency. Such an intense necessity of action in reference to the object to which he had dedicated his whole being, and on which his attention was ever strongly and tenaciously fixed, implied an inconceivable severity of conviction that he had *one thing to do,* and that he who would do some great thing in this short life, must apply himself to the work with such a concentration of his forces as to idle spectators, who live only to amuse themselves, looks like insanity."

I have already mentioned my father's spirit of Christian enterprise prompting him to form and execute bold and noble designs. This heroic resolution may be traced to his conquest over the world. The grace of God which bringeth salvation taught him, at an early period of life, to deny ungodliness and worldly desires. "The people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits."* He was strong and of a good courage, because he had overcome the world, and this was the victory which overcame the world, even his faith. He could adopt the apostle's language, "Far be it from me to glory, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." He knew that if any man will be a friend of the world, he is the enemy of God, because the friendship of this world is enmity with God. He was not one of "those splendid, sumptuous, and fashionable professors of Christianity upon whom their religious teachers inculcate in vain that solemn interdiction of their habits, 'Be not conformed to this world.'" Being disengaged from earthly objects of attachment, having no schemes of worldly aggrandisement to pursue, being free from all artificial, or, as Goldsmith aptly calls them, "pride-created wants," not "seeking great things for *himself*," his mind was at liberty to devise and execute great things for God and his cause. The animating hope of a better, even an heavenly country, having fired his heart with courage and nerved his arm with vigour; as one who felt that he was called to glorious virtue, he aspired to heroical achievement, and "dared to be singularly good."*

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* Daniel xi. 32.

The preceding pages amply prove that he was a *working* Christian. His hands were incessantly occupied in the *work* of faith, and the *labour* of love. He acted like one who believed that doing good was the great business of a Christian. He did not seek or desire rest on earth; well knowing that the present life is the season for active service, the future for refreshment and repose. He, therefore, sought to be "always abounding in the work of the Lord." He remembered that he was living in a world where "God only and the angels may be spectators." He "laboured and did not faint," knowing that *in due season* he should reap a rich harvest, and that, continuing faithful unto death, he would then be permitted to rest from his labours.* He was desirous of attaining to the honour and happiness of that faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord when he cometh, will find diligently employed in the work assigned to him. I have reason to believe that he had habitual respect to the final account to be rendered of the deeds performed in the body, and that his ambition (a lawful and laudable ambition) was—that when the season of recompense—the resurrection of the just—shall arrive, and "every one receive his own reward according to his own labour," he might not lose anything which he had wrought, but might receive a full reward. He therefore acted under the controlling and subduing impulse of one great motive—regard to the will of his great Master in heaven, and desire to promote the glory of his heavenly Father—believing that "whatsoever good thing any one doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord."

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* "Oh this single eye, this disinterested spirit, this *freedom from worldly hopes and worldly fears*, this flaming zeal, this daring to be singularly good, this holy, laudable ambition to lead the van—Oh it is what?—an heaven upon earth!"—Whitefield's Letters, vol. iii. p. 343.

In keeping Jehovah's true and righteous judgments, "there is great reward;" and no persons experience more largely the truth of this gracious declaration, than those who are "ready to every good work." My father said once on a public occasion, "we cannot do good to others, without receiving a blessing ourselves;" and he spoke that which he knew to be true, and testified that which had been largely fulfilled in his own experience. As he was "rich in good works," so was he himself spiritually enriched by means of them. No man ever partook more largely of "the riches of communicated wealth." He gave both time and money, not grudgingly, and "being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, God made all grace to abound toward him, that he always having all sufficiency in all things, might abound to every good work."* The Divine rule of proceeding is, "To him that hath shall be given—The liberal soul shall be made fat—He that deviseth liberal things, by liberal things shall he stand." The bountiful eye, the generous heart, the open hand, will prove to him who possesses them, the means of large increase and firm establishment.

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* "N'avons nous pas toute l'éternité pour nous reposer?"—Arnauld to Nicole.

My father was habitually cheerful. I do not remember to have seen him in a state of gloom and depression. He always looked and spoke like a happy man, who "rejoiced to work righteousness."

He found that the ways of heavenly wisdom are pleasantness, and all her paths, peace; that "the work of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever." His peace was like the continuous flow and unbroken course of a river—

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* See 2 Cor. ix. 7—11.

Labitur et labetur in omne volubilis ævum,

because his righteousness was like the waves of the sea, a constant series of successive acts—

Velut unda supervenit undam.

He "walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost." I doubt not that the joy of the Lord was his strength, and that he walked all the day in the light of God's countenance.

This will be found to accord with the ordinary rules of Christian experience. The secret of spiritual, like that of bodily health, is useful employment and active exercise. The late Rev. Andrew Fuller, the indefatigable secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society, in a letter to a friend and brother minister, dated May 16, 1796, informs him, that some years previously he had sunk into a state of great spiritual depression, so that he nearly lost all the enjoyment of religion; but, he adds, "within these few years my soul has not only recovered its former tone, but blessed be God! a greater degree of spiritual strength than at any former period; and I think my engagement in the work of the Mission, has more than anything contributed to it. Before this, I did little but pore over my misery; but since I have betaken myself to greater activity for God, my strength has been recovered, and my soul replenished. I have not been contented with ransacking for past evidences of love to God; but have been enabled to love and serve him afresh; looking for mercy to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world."

In another letter, dated Dec. 3, 1793, he says,—"Let us do all we can in our different stations. Respectability of character and situation, affords great opportunity of doing good. We have several of us, in different ways, hereby, fresh openings for usefulness. It is a trust, as well as other things, of which we must give account; and I hope our account will be with joy, and not with grief.

"I have found, the more I do for Christ, the better it is with me. I never enjoyed so much of the pleasures of religion, as I have within the last two years, since we have engaged in the Mission business. Mr. Whitefield used to say, 'The more a man does for God, the more he may.'"*

Another eminently useful minister has borne testimony to the same fact, as verified in his own experience, in these words:—"I have very sensibly found that the more ardent my spirit is for God's glory simply, the more I enjoy of personal interest in his salvation. I used to say, 'If the Lord would but relieve me, and give me to see my interest clear in his love, then I would indeed devote myself to his glory.' But seeking his glory, and leaving him to make me feel appropriating grace, I have found my own life by losing it abundantly, and through great mercy, for it is all of mercy, I have no doubts whatever."†

The late excellent Rev. Henry Venn says, "*He went about doing good.* This is the pattern for every

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* Life of Rev. Andrew Fuller, by Dr. Ryland, pp. 254—257, 365.

† Memoir of Rev. Samuel Kilpin, 3rd edition, p. 25.

Christian. He is a counterfeit one who does not strive to imitate it. The strength, the alacrity, the joy of the soul, is connected with this imitation. Religious people are heavy and moping, and cast down, principally because they are idle and selfish. The active, benevolent spirit of watching for opportunities to do essential service to our fellow-creatures, they often feel no more than the profane. What then avail notions and doctrines believed to no purpose ?"

That great practical divine, Richard Baxter, in his 'Right Method for a Settled Peace of Conscience and Spiritual Comfort,' gives the following as one of his directions :—

> " If you would learn the most expeditious way to peace and settled comfort, 'Study well the art of doing good ; and let it be your every day's contrivance, care, and business, how you may lay out all that God hath trusted you with, to the greatest pleasing of God, and your own most comfortable account.'
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> " Those men that study no other obedience than only to do no (positive) harm, are so far from true comfort, that they have yet no true Christianity ; I mean such as will be saving to them. Doing good is a high part of a Christian's obedience, and must be the chief part of his life. . . . . . The apostle's charge is plain, and we must obey it, if we will have any peace, 'While you have time, do good to all men, especially to them of the household of faith.'—Gal. vi. 10. [After quoting several other texts, he adds,] What a multitude of such passages may you find in Scripture !'
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> " You see, then, how great a part of your calling and religion consisteth in doing good. Now it is not enough to make this your care now and then, or to do good when it falls in your way ; but you must study which are good works, and which are they that you are called to ; and which are the best works,

and to be preferred, that you choose not a less instead of a greater. God looks to be served with the best. You must study for opportunities of doing good, and of the means of succeeding and accomplishing it. . . . . You must know what talents God hath entrusted you with, and those you must study to do good with, whether it be time, or interest in men, or opportunity, or riches, or credit, or authority, or gifts of mind, or of body. If you have not one, you have another, and some have all.

"This, therefore, is the thing that I would persuade you to; take yourself for God's steward; remember the time when it will be said to you, 'Give account of thy stewardship; thou shalt be no longer steward.' Let it be your every day's contrivance, how to lay out your gifts, time, strength, riches, or interest, to your Master's use. Think which way you may do most, first to promote the Gospel and the public good of the church, and then which way you may help towards the saving of particular men's souls; and then which way you may better the commonwealth, and how you may do good to men's bodies. . . . . Ask yourself every morning, 'Which way may I this day most further my Master's business, and the good of men?' Ask yourself every night, 'What good have I done to-day?' And labour as much as may be, to be instruments of some great and standing good, and of some public and universal good, that you may look behind you at the year's end and at your life's end, and see the good that you have done."

He thus charges rich men, in a tone of solemn warning:—

"God doth not leave it to you as an indifferent thing.—Matt. xxv. You must feed Christ in the poor, or else starve in hell yourselves; you must clothe Christ in the poor, or be laid naked in his fiery indignation for ever. How much more diligently, then, must you help men's souls, and the church of Christ, as the need is greater, and the work better!"

Such was Thomas Wilson—a holy and eminently good man—an imitator of Him who is good and continually does good—a follower and disciple of Him who pleased not himself, but went about doing good—one who did not seek his own but the things of Jesus Christ—a man who "made doing good the great business of his life, to which he applied himself with as much constancy and diligence as other men labour at their trades." But although he did more, much more, than others, he would have been the first to acknowledge that he was "an unprofitable servant, and had done no more than it was his duty to do"—nor even that fully and completely. If he "laboured more abundantly," he would have disclaimed all merit, and added, "Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

Who, then, is willing, after having perused this imperfect memorial, to devote first his own self to the Lord, and then to dedicate his time and strength both of body and mind to the work of the Lord? Who, then, is willing *this day* to consecrate his service, and to offer willingly his *gain*, unto Jehovah, and his *substance* to the Lord of the whole earth?

May the God of all grace, whom my father diligently and faithfully served, vouchsafe so rich a blessing to this feeble filial tribute—that "*his* zeal may provoke" not *one* or *a few* merely, but "*very many*" to "go and do likewise"—that his example may "provoke to love and to good works" *all* who may read the record of his life.

I subjoin the remaining portions of Dr. Philip's letter, which the reader will, I think, agree with me, are, even in their separate and disjointed form, too valuable to be omitted. I have added references to the pages where the subtracted passages will be found.

"We have many excellent memoirs of eminent persons which we would not willingly lose; but these being, for the most part, memoirs of literary, contemplative, or imaginative men, or of professed authors—if they gratify our curiosity as to how they studied, or wrote, or slept, or ate, contain very little calculated to be useful to the bulk of mankind. The church has a rich treasure in the lives of the Reformers, and in the memoirs of able and useful ministers of Christ; but such men are considered by the generality of readers, as belonging to a profession which is regarded as having duties peculiar to itself, with which it is not for them to intermeddle, and whose example they are under no obligation to imitate.

"Without going into the causes of this fallacy, we merely advert to it in passing, and remark that a memoir of your father will not be liable to this objection, and may be more generally useful than it would have been, had he been presented to the public clothed in the habiliments of the ministerial character.

"Thomas Wilson was, among private Christians, what Howard was among philanthropists; and his example being more within the reach of the great bulk of mankind, in the church of Christ particularly, it may be attended with a deeper, wider, and more powerful influence, than mere commiseration for the sufferings of any portion of afflicted humanity could inspire. If Dr. Franklin could ascribe any good he had done in the world, to *Cotton Mather's Essays to do Good,* what may we not expect from the blessing of God on a living commentary on such a subject as the memoir of your father will not fail to furnish? We have not done with our friends, it has been remarked, when they are removed from this world. We are to be 'followers of those who through faith and patience are inheriting the promises.' And when their faith and patience have been remarkable, we are guilty of a dereliction of our duty, if we do not make them known to others, that their followers or imitators may be animated and increased.

"In our estimate of the services of any individual to the public, we have nothing to do with anything but his value to the *community.* To judge of the merit of an action by the motive that may be supposed to have influenced the actor is palpably unjust, and is never tolerated except under the influence of party spirit, when the voice of reason is drowned amidst the clamour of the passions.

"When men do good to their fellow-men, if it is done on worldly principles, they are entitled to their reward; but from the action of worldly principles merely, the church of Christ has little to hope for. It was for our instruction and warning on this head, that the Spirit of God, in the sacred Scriptures, has put a mark on some of the kings of Israel who are said to have served God 'but not with a perfect heart.' What a difference between the character of Moses and that of Jehu! How admirably was the instrumentality of each of these persons adapted to the work assigned him! For such work as Jehu had to perform, God in his providence often selects the worst of men; but in raising up instruments to declare his revealed will, generally speaking, he imparts to them the spirit of their commission. Had Moses formed the Israelitish nation into a kingdom, and left the throne in the possession of his family, what a handle infidels would have made of that circumstance against his Divine legation!"

"Your father received the Gospel not as the prescription of a rule of life to the innocent—not as an annunciation of a system of relief only to the guilty—not as a provision to assist men to save themselves—but as a ministration of life to the *dead;* not as an improved edition of the law of nature, but as a dispensation of the grace of God to a perishing world.

"Convinced before God of his lost condition as a sinner, he looked for redemption through the blood of Christ only. Alive to a sense of his helplessness and moral inability to serve God without the renovating influence of the Holy Spirit, he looked up for the Divine aid which he required to work all his works in him. And from the high standard of moral excellence which he set before himself, and to which he pressed forward, the cross of Christ never lost any of its freshness, nor the prayer of the publican, 'God be merciful to me a sinner,' any of its adaptation to his circumstances.

"While others admired the excellence they observed in him, he was often occupied in reflecting on his own responsibility; while they meditated on the reward that was awaiting him, he was placing his hopes for the future on the mercy of God through Christ; and while they considered his life as a continual sacrifice, he was sowing to the Spirit in the hope of reaping life everlasting.

"Under a deep and abiding sense of the sinfulness of his own heart, and of his shortcomings in the service of God, the doctrine of justification by faith constituted the life of his religion, and he had no sympathy with those who regard it as having lost its power with its novelty, or who imagine that the song of the redeemed around the throne should become less interesting to us, as we approach the heavenly state, where, so far from becoming antiquated, it will be always new.

"His creed was not that of a sect that would substitute a priestly and an unscriptural dominion in place of the reign of God in the heart. He had no faith in the triad of high-churchmen,—baptismal regeneration, apostolical succession, and the Divine right of episcopacy; but he believed that the love of God the Father, the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, were not confined to any one section of the Christian church, but extended to all who come to God through Christ in a humble reliance upon the Spirit, irrespective of the denomination under which they might range themselves."*

"It has been remarked by Paley, that it is not that on which we can lay the greatest stress in an argument that has the most commanding influence on our convictions and feelings, (or words to that effect;) and the truth of the remark is nowhere more strongly illustrated than in the force which a life formed on the principles of Christianity, exercises over the faith and feelings of the Christian.

"No man might have been supposed to stand less in need of such an auxiliary to his faith than Richard Baxter, and yet he speaks of its paramount influence on the life of religion in his heart. As nothing has a more paralysing effect on the vital energies of the Christian life in certain stages of its progress, than those discrepancies which we have too often occasion to remark in the deportment of men making more than ordinary profession of the religion of Christ; so there is nothing more confirming and enlivening to his faith, than the testimony that a life formed upon its principles, and wholly consecrated to its service, yields in its favour. Such men are living witnesses of the truth of the Bible; they walk about among us, and go before us, as heaven-descended messengers, as having nothing to do on this earth but to assure us that God is still willing to dwell with men, to unfold to us the nature and confirm to us the certainty of a world of felicity beyond the grave, and to prevail upon us to accompany them thither.

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* See pp. 133, 134, *ante*.

"In the selection of preceptors for youth, and of tutors for training up young men for the ministry, too much attention cannot be paid to certain points in their characters, and the influence these points might have in the formation of the characters of those placed under their charge. More than mere skill in the art of war is necessary to form the character of a great general. To qualify him to occupy the highest place assigned to men of his class, he must not only be able to command an army, but also to create one; not only to be able to marshal his troops for the conflict, but also to inspire them with the spirit of victory.

"The opinion of Dugald Stewart as to the influence of a tutor on the character of his pupils is worth knowing. Being asked whether he would place his son, a youth of great promise, under the tuition of a certain professor of considerable celebrity in the department he filled, he surprised his friends by replying to their question in the negative. Being called upon to state his reasons for a determination that appeared so extraordinary, he remarked, 'I honour Mr. ——— for his learning, and I approve of his method of communicating instruction to his class, but he is an *artificial* and an *avaricious* man; and all the advantages my son might derive from his being under his tuition, might not be a compensation for the contracting, deteriorating influence which the character of the professor might exert over the heart of his pupil.'" *

"There was no mysticism mixed up with the religious opinions of your father. His views were intelligible, simple, and scriptural. The glories of redemption had on his mind a practical influence; and the happiness which some others have sought in vain, in stretching their faculties after the incomprehensible, he sought for, and found, in the heavenly employment of doing good. Happiness is not to be sought for its own sake; it is a collateral good, arising out of a consciousness of serving God. God meeteth him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, remembering him in his ways; and this is in accordance with the general plan by which God is pleased to regulate his communications to his people. The generality seek to invert the order of God, and it is no wonder that they should be disappointed. They would have the rewards of labour, without its sacrifices and its toils—the crown, without the cross—the 'Well done, good and faithful servant,' without having sustained his character, or performed his service.

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* See pp. 196, 197, *ante*.

" 'Exercise is health, and occupation morality;' and we may as well expect to preserve the health of the body by keeping it in a state of inaction, as think to be able to keep the mind in perfect peace without the consciousness of living to God, and for the good of others.

"Few men I have known possessed a larger share of the mind of Christ than your father. His faith in Jesus, by which he obtained peace with God, worked by love, and purified his heart. His religion was as a well of living water within him, springing up unto eternal life. Under the influence of that great mystery, Christ formed in the heart, the hope of glory, he had the kingdom of God, that kingdom which consisteth of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, established in his heart.

"*Sincerity* before God and man, was apparent in all he said or did. His temper was without a tincture of envy; nothing delighted him more than to hear that others, in any instance, were going before him in his own walks of usefulness. His conversation was without a savour of detraction, and its influence on the circle around him repressed unkind feelings, and imperceptibly kindled the charities of every heart into a warmer glow. His friendships were founded on the principles of the Gospel, and the absence of his friends, or any interruption of their correspondence with him, produced no change in him towards them. If they had not seen him, or corresponded with him, for many years, they sought their way to Highbury place, assured of a reception as cordial as if they and he had not been separated from each other more than a few days. United to Christ, and in the great principles of the common salvation, they knew that no paltry interests or selfish tendencies could separate them from each other. He made no profession of friendship that he did not feel; and if he was opposed to the views of any one, that individual might dread his opposition, but he knew that he had to deal with a candid and honourable opponent, and that he would do nothing to oppose him unbecoming the gentleman and the Christian. If at any time the moral machinery of any of our great societies, with which he was connected, was going wrong, and a concealed agency was surmised as the cause of it, no one ever suspected the hand of Thomas Wilson. If he loved power, it was for the sake of doing good; an ambition that none but fools, or calumniators, or evil doers have ever ventured to condemn; and he never used means to acquire or maintain it, of which any good man might be ashamed, and this rendered the exercise of it safe for himself and others.

"The great and leading principle of his character was, the *entireness of his consecration to God;* and all the other elements of which it was composed might be said to be various developments of *this one great principle.* His charity, his humanity, his zeal for the cause of Christ, his love for good men, his liberality, were modifications only of this one principle bearing various names, according to the several diversities in the objects to which they were directed. In the sphere in which he moved we have had but *one* Thomas Wilson in the church for the last forty years; but among the fathers of our religious and benevolent institutions, he had for his associates many good and great men.

"A comparison between him and Rowland Hill may create a smile on the countenances of some who knew them both;

but in one great principle the resemblance always appeared to me striking. None could be more *indifferent as to the opinion the world might entertain of them,* and in no two men I ever knew, was the ascendency more apparent of that principle which made Paul willing to be anything or nothing that Christ might be exalted, for it shone forth in all their words and actions. Many have done great things for Christ, and have been honoured by Christ in their work, but for them 'to live was Christ.' The interests of the kingdom of God had the first place in your father's affections, in his esteem, and in his plans; and though no man in England was more happy in his family, or more beloved and respected in his domestic circle than he was, the praise bestowed upon Levi that 'he knew neither father nor mother,' where the word of God was concerned, was nothing more than was due to him. What a blessing it would be to the church, and to the world, had we more of our rich men like-minded! How poor and paltry for the most part are the objects which occupy their ambition, compared with those which fired the zeal and engrossed the cares of Thomas Wilson! I never see men living to themselves without feeling an emotion of pity. I regard them as feeding upon ashes, and as exhausting the good things of this life in search of a happiness they can never yield; when they might have the blessing of God which maketh rich and addeth no sorrow, and prove a blessing to both worlds—to that which now is, by the enlargement of the church of Christ, and to that of the church triumphant also, where there is joy in the presence of angels over the repentance of one sinner.*

"Your father might be said to have been a Utilitarian in the Scripture sense of the term. He valued men and things from their direct and relative influence on the elevation and happiness of the human race in their relation to time and eternity. If he did not, as was said of the Greek philosopher, bring down philosophy from heaven to earth, his constant aim was to bring heaven and earth nearer to each other, and he was a powerful agent in the use of the most effectual means to accomplish it. When the Greeks were wasting their time and losing themselves in the perplexing labyrinths of metaphysics, and there was no end to their useless discussions about the chief good, Socrates, being asked for his opinion on the subject, replied: 'If you ask me what is good for a burn or a fever, I may perhaps be able to give you the information you require; but a good that is not good for anything, is good for nothing.' Your father loved the doctrines of the Bible; from them he derived all his principles of action; but he never looked at them apart from their practical tendency, and neither sermons, nor books, nor conversation had any attractions for him if they did not bear upon the conscience, and stir up the mind to works of charity.

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* See pp. 197, 198, 270, 271, 228, 229, 186, 187, *ante.*

"Vivid perceptions of Divine things are desirable, but they are not always the privilege of the people of God in this world. Like the vision which the disciples saw on the mount, they are not to be considered as constituting our present state, or as absolutely necessary to our happiness in it. Luther and Bunyan spoke of the realities of the things of God as if they had seen them with their eyes and heard them with their ears. Thomas Wilson's mind was differently constituted from theirs; he had very little imagination; his temperament was cool, and no man could be freer from anything like enthusiasm than he was. There was scarcely anything like personal excitement about him. His religious exercises had scarcely anything like passion in them, and he spoke about the great things of eternity as a man who believed in their reality, but as one who looked more at their certainty than at their glory. He never would have been a popular preacher. His addresses and his prayers in his family were sensible, but without much warmth; so that it was often matter of remark, that there should be such a contrast between the energy he manifested in *action* and the apparent coldness of his devotional feelings. Different as he was in these respects from the great reformer and the author of the Pilgrim's Progress, his mind was not less under the influence of Divine truth than theirs were; and if his pleasures in the things of God were less lively, they were more steady and uniform, and less subject to those depressions to which theirs were occasionally liable. If his impressions of Divine things were not so vivid as those of some others, no man could be more firmly persuaded of their truth; and while others were constantly making abortive attempts to bring down heaven to earth, he was satisfied with the conviction of their certainty; and realising the veracity of God in the promises, he busied himself in following the example of his Divine Master, going about doing good, and in his measure found it his meat and his drink to do the will of his Father in heaven.

"His liberality proceeded from *principle*, and was not like those streams that flow at particular seasons, leaving their channels dry for the greater part of the year; but it resembled the perennial spring that is constantly sending forth its waters alike at all seasons. What he gave, was given upon principle, and his expenditure never went beyond his income. He gave up a lucrative business, when a young man, that he might give himself entirely to the service of God; but he retired with a fortune which he considered sufficient to enable him to live as a private gentleman, and at the same time carry on the plans he had formed for the advancement of the kingdom of God."*

"The spirit of the Gospel is a spirit of universal and enlightened philanthropy. With this spirit the mind of Thomas Wilson was deeply imbued, and nothing that related to its interests was foreign to him. A mind like his, under the influence of such a principle, could not view with indifference the question on which I found it necessary to visit England in 1826; and if he did not, at a glance of his eye, see its relations to the great objects to which his life was

* See pp. 167, 168, *ante*.

devoted, he did not, like many of my friends, wait till he heard the opinions of Lord John Russell, Lord Glenelg, Mr. Huskisson, and Robert Southey, respecting it, or wait the triumph of the cause before he declared his sentiments and proffered his assistance. He never for a moment considered the subject as one of party politics; but as a question involving the civil and religious rights of an oppressed portion of his fellow-subjects. He considered the Hottentots and others in their condition, in South Africa, as having a right to their wives and their children, and as having a right to bring the produce of their labour to a fair market, and that the colonial government had no right to oppress the missionary institutions, force the missionaries to leave them, and reduce the people to a condition much more intolerable than that of common slavery; and that we were not to concede the point when we had in our hands the means of securing it, or to shrink from bringing it before the public, to avoid giving offence to the ministers of the crown.

"By his zeal and liberality and the force of his example he contributed much to the diffusion of Divine truth. Perhaps no parts of the heathen world stood in greater need of the Gospel than many parts of our native land into which he was the means of introducing it." *

"From your father's early and long-continued connexion with Hoxton College, and the interest he felt in the young men whom he was anxious to provide with spheres of usefulness, and whom he was always ready to aid while they needed his assistance, his sympathies perhaps lay more among young ministers than among those who had been for a longer period enduring the toils and heat of the day; but if the sun of the rising ministry appeared to him more radiant with hope, no one would feel more heartfelt delight than he experienced in gazing upon the moral creations called into being by the aged minister, and illuminated by the parting rays of his setting sun.

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* See pp. 329, 330, 311, 312, *ante*.

"Next to the immediate guidance of God by his Spirit, the counsel and encouragement of virtuous and enlightened friends afford the most powerful aid in encountering temptations in the career of duty. It was one of the excellences of your father's character that he could appreciate such friends, and that he was, generally speaking, always ready to avail himself of their counsel. I never knew him fall into a serious error but once, and the manner in which he retraced his steps when it was pointed out to him, furnishes us with one of the most endearing features of his character * * *

"In the great work in which your father spent his life, he had an admirable coadjutor in your mother. . . . . . It would be saying too little, to say that she was no check to the liberality of her husband; she entered with the greatest cordiality into all his generous plans, and felt as much pleasure in conducting her establishment on a principle that would enable her husband to carry them into effect, as some mothers have felt in hoarding for their children.

"The students who were frequent visitors at Highbury place she regarded with the eye of a mother, and the tender interest she took in them, and the purifying and elevating influences of her manner and conversation, did much to correct their taste, improve their sensibilities, refine their sentiments, strengthen their faith, animate their hopes, and kindle their desires after higher degrees of moral excellence than they had previously reached. In no other form on earth is the power of goodness so overpowering as it is felt when embodied in an accomplished Christian female.

"The steadiness with which your father pursued his course for so many years presents a striking contrast to that of several of his contemporaries, whose first works in the church of Christ were matter of wonder to the world, and whose last works were the subject of its ungodly triumph.

"I have been a close observer of what has been taking place in the different sections of the church of Christ for between forty and fifty years, and among all the opinions and systems that have been broached during that period, notwithstanding the claims their authors have laid to originality, I have seen nothing new, and they may all be traced to an imperfect sanctification, or to the limitations of the human mind.

"Some minds are never at rest, but, like the Athenians, are always seeking after something new; others go wrong from viewing things apart from their relations; others hate to think with the many, and go wrong from an affectation of singularity; some are ambitious of power, for its own sake, and everything is sacrificed to their darling passion; others regard men as so many machines that they are to work upon by a power of their own invention, and they go to work as if the world had been made yesterday, and the experience of past ages has no value in their estimation. Some we have known so full of self-conceit, that they enter upon the search of truth as navigators enter unknown seas on a voyage of discovery, and having scornfully neglected what has been done by others, bring forward their own common-places as lost truths of the greatest importance, which it was reserved for them to restore.

"To these we may add a large class of well-meaning men who are unsettled themselves, and always unsettling the opinions and principles of others, from a natural fickleness of temper, and contractedness of mind. These are the men whom Pascal designates men of one idea, and to whom that profound author ascribes the greatest proportion of the erroneous opinions and heresies which have disturbed and unsettled the minds of men on religious subjects.

"The mind of your father was so happily constituted, and so habitually under the influence of the great truths of the Gospel, as to secure it against the corrupting influence of these elements of change.

"*Humility* was one of the leading characteristics of his mind, and he meddled not with matters too high for him. His ambition was to be 'approved of God,' and he was, to a great extent, indifferent to the opinion men might entertain of him. He hungered and thirsted after righteousness, and the bread of life and the water of life were always new to him. The word of God dwelt in him richly in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, helping him to prove what is that good and acceptable will of God; and his path was that of the just, which like the light shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

"If there is one spectacle upon earth more sublime in the eyes of heaven than any other, it is the Christian warrior finishing his course, and laying hold on eternal life.

"While the world holds up to our admiration those who have been the most successful candidates for its wealth and honours, the voice from heaven calls upon us to mark the perfect man and to behold the upright departing in peace under the paternal smile of the Almighty.

"How poor is the world's triumph compared to that of the Apostle—'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith ; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge will confer upon me, and not on me only, but on all who love his appearing.'"

Feeling desirous that my testimony concerning my honoured father should be either confirmed, or qualified and corrected by that of another individual competent to bear witness, from long intimate acquaintance with him, I applied to my highly esteemed friend, Rev. J. A. James, of Birmingham, requesting him to give me his view of my father's character, which he has very kindly done in the following communication:—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—Although I have not the vanity to suppose, that by any effort of my pen I could add anything to the interest and value of the memoir of your excellent father, which you are now preparing for the press, I feel strongly prompted to do honour to his memory, by this short and imperfect sketch of his character as it appeared to me; and thus to plant a flower among the many that will grow around his tomb. An acquaintance, somewhat intimate, of thirty years' standing, gave me an opportunity of knowing him in almost every phase of his public and private character, and of forming a tolerably just appreciation of his many and great excellences, as well as of those few and little imperfections, with which, in his case, as in every other upon earth, sterling qualities were associated. It is painful to me, on our account, though not on his, to think of him as departed; and with whatever melancholy pleasure I may read the history of his useful life, and thus recall by recollection my own intercourse with him, I shall still be compelled to exclaim in laying down the volume, 'It is a good and faithful portrait; but, alas that we have now only a picture, instead of the living man!' I owe a debt of gratitude to his memory, which I feel willing and happy thus to acknowledge, and in some measure to discharge, inasmuch as he not only showed me much kindness and respect up to the time of his last illness, but, when I was young in the ministry, introduced me to public notice, by inviting me to preach in Hoxton Chapel, and at a subsequent period evinced his interest in my usefulness, by intimating his wish that I would occupy the pulpit of the largest of the chapels which he erected in the metropolis, (Craven Chapel,) and often expressed his delight in the prosperity of the church committed to my care and oversight. I felt, therefore, on his decease as though I had lost one of my earliest and most valued friends. Nor was this feeling confined to my own breast, for when he died, a sense of deprivation came over our whole denomination, which could have been produced by the death of no other layman, nor by the death of many ministers. It was the fall not of a fir-tree, but of a cedar, in whose broad shadow so many churches and pastors had reposed, and poured forth to God their praises for the help afforded to them by this his devoted servant.

"There can be no diversity of opinion about the specific nature, any more than there can be any doubt of the reality, of your father's excellences. All will look at them from the same point, and see them in the same aspect. They were of one kind, and that the best. However numerous the artists might be who take his moral likeness, and however varied might be the degrees of verisimilitude and of artistic skill in the arrangement, the position and general outline must be the same in all. I consider him as one of the finest exceptions, which modern times have presented, from the reproach of the apostle upon the professors of that day, 'All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.' I contemplate him as the active and liberal philanthropist, the zealous and earnest Christian, employing his wealth for the promotion of the cause of Christ. How rare an instance is it, for a man endowed with patrimony, carrying on a lucrative and respectable trade, and with the prospect of accumulating wealth, to retire, as he did, from the pursuit of secular objects in the midst of his days, and give up his whole self, his whole life, and no small portion of his fortune, to the promotion of God's cause! There are two examples of benevolent activity, sometimes, though not often, to be met with, which are as beautiful as they are rare, and of which it is difficult to say which has the stronger claim upon our admiration,—I mean the man who after realising by trade an ample fortune for himself, is still willing, when he might retire into elegant and luxurious seclusion, to endure the fatigues and anxieties of business, with the intention of devoting all its profits to God; and he who, when a prospect of great wealth to be acquired by trade is opening before him, foregoes the splendid advantage, and quits the busy mart to consecrate his life, with such means as he has, to the service of the Lord. The latter was the case of your honoured father; and, upon the whole, I am inclined to award the palm of superior usefulness to this kind of self-devotement, inasmuch as the consecration of time and bodily labour, is at once less frequent and more serviceable, than that of money. More persons can be found willing to give their wealth, than can be found to give *themselves.* To see a man economising the resources of a handsome, though at the commencement of his useful career, by no means an exuberant income; relinquishing the equipage and other appendages of wealth, and contenting himself with the simple habits of men possessed of not half his means, in order that he might have the more to dispense; to see this same man hiring an office, employing a clerk, and going to the scene of his benevolent occupation, there to be accessible to all who wanted either his money or his counsel; and all this with the same constancy, punctuality, and untiring perseverance, as any merchant in the metropolis goes to his counting-house, was a scene which I believe had no parallel, and still has none.

"It is such entire consecration as this, of wealthy and public-spirited individuals, that we want for carrying on the great moral enterprise which has been set up for making a better world—men who will feel themselves moved and called of God to quit the busy scene of secular pursuits, and instead of retiring into elegant seclusion, placing themselves in the midst of the religious activity of the age as the main prop and pillar of some one public institution. Stipendiary secretaries cannot at present be dispensed with; but what an immense advantage would accrue to our societies, if each one of them had one wealthy individual, who, without dictation or a patronising air, but with a modesty proportioned to his zeal, would devote his leisure, his fortune, and his time, to the object of his preference! How could such men be so honourably, so usefully, or so happily employed? *Societies* are necessary, and produce great benefit, but we have need to watch against their tendency to repress individual energy, and to make us feel as if we could do nothing alone. I know that, as a general principle, man in a state of isolation is feeble, but mighty in a state of union: yet one of the right influences of union, is its action on the individual man in awakening the consciousness of his own power, and fostering in him an inward creative energy.

"Your father was a striking example to the church of God of what one man in private life, when disposed and determined to give himself up to benevolent activity, can do for its welfare. It is very true that in him there might have been something of taste, as well as of principle, in his course of life, and I believe there was. He was happier in this occupation, apart from religious motive, than he would have been in any other; it was evident that in this employment his soul had found its own sphere of activity and element of enjoyment. He always looked happy in his work; and I can conceive how pleasant were his walks from Tyndale, and Highbury place, across the Islington meadows to his office, conversing with himself and with his Lord, about the care of the churches and their pastors which had come upon him. There was a buoyancy of spirits about him which lifted him above the depressing influence of discouragement: it was not insensibility or indifference, but an elasticity, which, if for a moment his mind yielded to the pressure of untoward events, rose again to its position, like the bulrush from the wave that had for a moment submerged it; or, to adopt a more appropriate simile, like the tree recovering its perpendicular when the gale that had bent it had passed over. Be it, then, that taste had something to do in all he did; we cannot help wishing and praying for more men of similar taste. How much better is it for mankind that this should prevail, than a taste for personal ease, domestic extravagance, and worldly grandeur! Happy would it be if, instead of building stately mansions, our rich professors had a propensity to erect chapels; if, instead of filling their own houses with gorgeous furniture, they would live to supply the house of God with useful ministers; and if, instead of giving expensive entertainments, they would be content with the Christian hospitality which he was ever ready to offer to the servants of the most high God. Be it so, that it was in part taste; yet how much more dignified an one, than the sordid craving for hoards of unemployed, unsanctified wealth; or the silly, yea criminal vanity of some professors, who are emulating the votaries of fashionable folly in all that can amuse the imagination, dazzle the senses, or gratify the appetite! Be it that it was in part his taste, what noble effects it has left behind it! 'The fashion of this world passeth away;' not only the objects on which many professing Christians lavish their wealth, perish and leave no trace behind, but even the fortunes they hand down to their posterity are dissipated in one or two generations; but there, in the spacious chapels he erected, in the churches he helped to form, in the ministers he assisted to educate; there, in the souls he thus helped to turn from sin to God, are the imperishable memorials, the unwithering fruits of his sacred and sublime ambition. Saurin, in one of the most eloquent of his sermons, says, 'I recollect here an epitaph said to be engraven on the tomb of Atolus of Rheims:—"He exported his fortune before him into heaven by his charities, he is gone thither to enjoy it."' This, I am aware, if interpreted in a Pharisaic sense, and as importing the idea of merit, would contain a detestable sentiment; but if nothing more be meant, than that the fruits of our charities will, in a way of grace, be gathered by us in heaven, it is at once true and beautiful. What a portion then has your father laid up in heaven, in the approving smiles of our gracious Redeemer, and in the happiness of those spirits of just men made perfect whom he was indirectly the means of raising to glory! Oh that our rich men would *thus* immortalise their wealth, and lay up their treasures in heaven!

" Some, I know, have imagined there was a little mixture of ostentation in your father's donations: and that they were all *public*. Certainly not *all;* though many of them were. Public, from the very nature of them, they must have been, and public I maintain they ought to have been. Chapels are public things, and it is absolutely impossible to keep in secresy the name of the man who built them. And then of the propriety of his name, or the name of any benefactor being known, there is no doubt in my own mind. It was ostentation which our Lord meant to condemn, not publicity. He who said, 'Take heed that ye do not your alms before men,' also commanded us to 'let our light so shine before men, that they seeing our good works might glorify our Father who is in heaven.' The two injunctions to secresy and publicity, coming from the same authority, must mean that the two are compatible with each other; that when no good end is to be answered by giving publicity to our liberality, it ought to be kept secret, but that, when others can be thereby 'provoked to love and to good works,' it ought to be made public. In each case the purity of the motive constitutes the sanctity of the action. We must give our example as well as our property to the cause of Christ; and how can this be accomplished, if men do not know what we do in the way of liberality? Our care should be, therefore, to watch well our motives, and not suffer our liberality to savour of vain-glory, and then give our names as well as our property to the cause of the Redeemer.

" It is impossible to sever your father's name, and influence, and liberality, from the cause of Protestant Nonconformity.

He was a Dissenter by inheritance and by conviction, and maintained, without ever flinching or wavering, an unbroken unvarying consistency. In an age when many, yielding to the powerful seductions of an establishment, have left the ranks of Dissent and gone over to the side of the national Church, he stood firm to the position he had taken up at the commencement of his career. Our whole denomination owe him a debt of gratitude, which they can discharge only by an intelligent, zealous, and liberal, yet candid and charitable support of that cause which was dear to his heart. He has taught us (may we not be slow to learn the lesson!) that the most effectual way to sustain and extend our principles is—not by bitter and angry controversy, nor by railing and envenomed accusations, nor by political confederation, but by educating ministers, building chapels, and planting churches. Our strength lies in our piety, our numbers, and our spiritual union; in our cordial attachment to, and public exhibition of, the great doctrines of the evangelical system; in a just appreciation and pastoral inculcation of our denominational principles; combined with a courteous, Christian, and charitable spirit towards those who adhere to the establishment as conscientiously as we have seceded from it. I think it probable that your excellent father had a small—and but a small—tincture of prejudice mixed up with his dissenting zeal. Alive as he necessarily must have been as a consistent Dissenter to the evils of an establishment, he did not, perhaps, sometimes make sufficient allowance for those who had been brought up under its influence, nor did he see in all cases with sufficient clearness of mental vision the distinguished excellences of those eminently good and useful men who labour within its pale. But even here some allowance must be made for his feelings. He could remember the time when Romaine, and Newton, and Pentycross, and others of the few evangelical clergy of those days mingled much more in the society of evangelical Dissenters than their successors, when increased in number, did; and he had witnessed a growing withdrawment of these good men from the Nonconformist circle, which tended perhaps to abate something of the ardour of his charity towards them: but still, most cordially did he rejoice in the revival of evangelical piety within the pale of the Church of England, and he took a lively interest in the life and labours of his distinguished relative the Bishop of Calcutta. He has left few behind him more firmly attached to, or more generously affected towards, our section of the Christian church.

"To your father's unwearied and liberal assistance, one of the most flourishing and important of our collegiate institutions owes much indeed. His attention to its interests was sleepless. No man can do our cause more good than by promoting the education of our ministers. The well-being of our churches depends, of course, mainly upon our ministers; and the efficiency of our ministry, upon our colleges. These important seminaries of sacred learning have not yet received that share of public interest and support to which their momentous consequence entitles them. How could our men of affluence better employ their property than in founding scholarships and granting exhibitions for the education of young men for the work of the ministry? Our departed friend was not among those who will be chargeable with this neglect. His life, and a large part of his income, were spent in this cause. His views of the *necessity* of ministerial education were correct, but perhaps he was not sufficiently impressed with the *importance* of its being carried on to any very high degree of classical, philosophical, and scientific acquirement. He admitted that an entrance to the ministry should be through an academic institution, but then the college was viewed too much, or too exclusively, by him as only the door to the pulpit. The education of dissenting laymen, even among the respectable classes, was in his youth not what it happily is now; and he was not, therefore, prepared to appreciate the value of literature from an enlarged acquaintance with it. The same remark will apply to the education of ministers who, when he entered on his career, and for a long while afterwards, had gone back from the standard of their forefathers, and were taught to do good with a much smaller modicum of general acquirement than is now justly considered necessary for the pastors of our churches. He lived to see a vast improvement in his own cherished institution, and, I believe, rejoiced in it. If in some earlier stages of his official connexion with Hoxton Academy he erred in attaching too little value to scholastic acquirements, it was the error, to a considerable extent, of no small portion of the religious public. His influence in the direction of the affairs of the college was, in the opinion of many intelligent observers, too often and too much given in the way of curtailing the already too short term of the curriculum of the students, in order to meet the application of the destitute churches for pastors. He did not consider that it is better for a church to be kept a year or two waiting for a pastor, than that it should be supplied with one whose education is incomplete. It used to be pleasantly said of him, that he had a double anxiety, first to get the young men into college, and then, as soon as possible, to get them out again. In his ardour for the spread of the Gospel and the supply of vacant churches, he occasionally lost his end by precipitancy in furnishing unsuitable men: he was too much guided by number, too little by quality. It is sometimes said that we had better have inefficient ministers than none at all. This leads to a great error. It would be a benefit if many of our churches could be relieved of useless ministers, even though they should remain destitute for years, so that they were settled at last with men likely to do good. Far better is it to have the ground quite unoccupied for any reasonable length of time, than to have it permanently covered with encumbrances.

"Your father's views of preaching were substantially correct. If he a little undervalued high degrees of learning, he neither misunderstood nor undervalued good sermons. If he could dispense—as perhaps he could—with more of the philosophical depth of thought and logical arrangement of argument than is quite desirable, he had an intuitive, clear, and strong perception of the right and best kind of preaching. No man knew better than he did what is the end and design of the pulpit, nor more keenly or accurately perceived how that end is to be obtained. It was his custom to give to the young men more advice on this subject than was always welcome; but many, who at the time thought the treasurer combined too much of the professor with the duties of the secular office, have lived to acknowledge that the counsels which they were disposed to receive with a smile, or to resist with a frown, were not only well intended, but wisely conceived. As to matter for the pulpit, he demanded the same as Paul had done before him, 'Christ crucified;' and as to manner, the same as all the teachers of elocution have demanded, from Quintilian to Whately, EARNESTNESS. He knew, what every wise observer and every superficial one also knows, that the secret of effectual public speaking is *animation*. It is true, as I have just said, provided there were plenty of this quality, he could be satisfied with less of manly thought than ought to give contentment even to an ordinary hearer; but then he loved that animation the more, the more it was sustained by mental power. Our tutors may learn a lesson of him as to the importance of *manner*, and be convinced that it is of little consequence what they do form, if at the same time they do not form *the preacher*.

"His zeal and liberality were not, however, restricted to the college as his only object. This was the centre of his circle of Christian activity, as it should have been; but his sphere comprehended whatever was doing in this remarkable age for God's glory and the world's conversion. He was one of the founders of the London Missionary Society, and died at the post of its treasurership. The first time I ever saw him, which is now between forty and fifty years ago, was when—if I mistake not—he was presiding at the annual meeting of the Religious Tract Society. Still, to whatever he gave his attention, his heart was upon the college, and the denomination it was intended to serve; and these very properly had the exertions of his right hand, to whatever he gave the operations of his left. This, I repeat, is what we want for every one of our academic institutions—some wealthy, influential, and active friend, who will devote to its interests the energies of his mind, the time of his life, and the contents of his purse; who shall be its patron without being its dictator, and help it without ruling it. More than this—we want men, if our jealousies will allow us to accept them, who, instead of dividing their influence into fractions, and scattering it in morsels to all societies, shall concentrate the light of their wisdom and the ardour of their zeal upon the denomination to which they belong. At present, we seem to have men, and money, and talent for everybody but ourselves, and for everything but our own institutions.

"In his mode of doing business, there was much to admire. He dwelt not in seclusion. He was ever accessible, and invited rather than repelled application—both for money and advice. 'The man that wants me is the man I want,' seemed to be his rule of action. No ebullitions of ill temper or insulting refusals drove from his presence, with wounded spirits and bruised hearts, the men whom the stern necessity of a bad system had brought into it with an appeal to his liberality. No haughty frown withered the hopes, and degraded in his own eyes, the dignity of the individual who, in his begging character, felt himself, without any additional dishonour, sufficiently low already. He may have been occasionally a little abrupt in his manner, when the number of calls was almost past endurance, and the obtrusiveness of the applicants had become offensive; but, generally speaking, the law of kindness was upon his lips, a gentle courteousness was in his manners, and if he added not to the weight of their purse by his liberality, he did not inflict a wound upon the feelings of those who came to him by his incivility. Some men's donations inflict more pain than other men's refusals. Nothing requires to be done with so much gracefulness of manner and kindliness of feeling as a refusal to an applicant for money. Your father abounded not in professions; dealt not in honeyed words which mean nothing, and do nothing but conceal hypocrisy; and affected no hollow politeness: on the contrary, he was plain-spoken, somewhat reserved at first, yet substantially and generally kind. He soon made men feel at home in his company; yet prevented them from taking liberties, and from indulging in familiarity.

"To his intimate friends, and in his intercourse with them, he manifested considerable cheerfulness of temper and pleasantness of manner. I see him at this moment rubbing his hands, and hear his hearty laugh when anything was told that peculiarly pleased him. There was a vivacity in his conversation, sometimes increased by an anecdote, which made his society to me peculiarly agreeable. His remarks, if not profound, were pleasing, and characterised by good sense; and towards the end of life, a growing softness of tone and manner imparted an air of solemnity without gloom to his deportment. There is an apostolic injunction which none will deny your father to have most assiduously complied with, 'Use hospitality one towards another without grudging.' What multitudes have met around his table and his domestic altar! His house was as open as his purse—it was the ministers' resort, and to which they were made welcome. He seemed happy in their society, and I can speak from experience that they were happy in his. His habitation yielded them the comforts of a home without its cares, and the accommodations of an inn without its charges. If his house was not the resort of the great, the good were always there: if fashion did not grace his board, piety sanctified it; and if his parties contained not wits, poets, and statesmen, they were composed of the ministers of Christ, the regenerators of the world, men whom God delights to honour. Nor has Highbury place lost *all* its attractions by his departure; the venerable matron who so long presided over his domestic economy with so much of lady-like courtesy and so much of Christian kindness, still remains to draw to that scene of unostentatious hospitality many who by the same visit revere the memory of the dead, and express their regard for the living.

"None who knew the subject of this sketch will ever forget or cease to admire his simplicity of character; whether that word be understood in the sense of guilelessness, or inartificialness. He was *transparent*, and carried neither mask nor veil. And then how unadorned in every thing—in his manners, in his domestic habits, in his furniture, in his conversation, in his correspondence! He affected nothing, and never seemed for a moment to study the art of decoration or concealment: you saw at once what he was, and all he was.

"The closing scene of your father's life was a beautiful exemplification of 'the patience of the saints.' It might have been expected that, from his activity in life, and from his love of occupation, he would, when laid aside, manifest some degree of restlessness and impatience, for it is rarely that the active and the passive virtues shine forth with equal radiance in the same character; but this is sometimes the case, and God thus puts honour on those in their death who gave glory to him in their life. When compelled by the advance of disease to give up his daily visits to his office and confine himself to his house, it was interesting to see him almost to the last carrying on his correspondence, caring for the churches, and helping to conduct the affairs of the college; and when he could not *go* to business, inviting business to *come* to him. In one of my last interviews with him I found him rejoicing over the prospect he then had of the near and good settlement at Lambeth Chapel of its amiable and devoted minister; and though obliged by pain to interrupt the conversation, and to leave the room for awhile, he resumed the subject on his return with pleasure and animation. He did his work so much to his Master's satisfaction that he kept him at it to the last. He was not forward to talk on topics of experimental and personal religion, yet all he said to me, was indicative of firm and simple reliance on the Redeemer for salvation and of a serene hope of a glorious immortality. Not the slightest infusion of vanity, or the smallest tincture of Pharisaic pride on looking back upon the past, appeared to me to corrupt his humility, or to rise like an earth-born vapour to hide in any measure the radiance of his setting sun. He left his works, his friends, and his Lord, to praise him, if they saw aught in him to commend, but uttered not a syllable in praise of himself. Still, he was happy in considering what God's grace had done through him, and could not but rejoice in the honour he had received from above.

"Such, then, was your honoured father as he appeared to me —such was the man whose distinction it was, to occupy, single and alone, without all doubt or competition, the first place for usefulness, as a layman, in the denomination to which he belonged. He not only stood above, but *far* above, all others in that active, liberal, and well-directed zeal on which the prosperity of any cause so much depends. Your affection and esteem will not be offended when I say he was not faultless. Who is? But his imperfections, like the solar spots, were lost amidst the brightness which, if they in any measure diminished it, they could not conceal. He was not free from some prejudices and weaknesses: he wanted a little more comprehensiveness of view, and a more just and adequate appreciation of the value of high mental cultivation; and perhaps, on the other hand, sometimes attached too much worth to matters of minor importance. I never saw in him the slightest indications of pride, but occasionally I noticed, in his active days, a few slight symptoms of vanity; and though by no means dogmatical or obtrusive in company, or dictatorial in co-operation with others, he was evidently well pleased with deference to his opinion. His purpose was sometimes perhaps taken too quickly without consultation or consideration, and was pursued with an inflexibility that occasionally approached the point of obstinacy. But this can be accounted for by the sagacity which he obviously possessed, in no ordinary degree—perceiving in most cases what was best to be done—and his tact and ability to do it in the best manner and at the proper season. His judgment of spheres of ministerial labour, sites of chapels, and probabilities of usefulness, was generally correct, and from a consciousness that he knew more on these points than most men, he was not disposed to yield his opinion to others. He knew he had taken a good aim, and did not allow his eye or his arm to be diverted from it. When his mind was made up on good grounds—and those selected by him were generally such—he was not easily to be turned aside from his purpose.

"The great lesson, as it appears to me, to be learned from your father's life—and it is a most momentous one for society—is this, the vast amount of good which may be accomplished by one man of piety, wealth, and activity, and who in the exercise of a large share of good sense, though without splendid genius or large acquirements, is disposed to consecrate his property, his energies, and his time to the cause of God and his fellow-creatures: and who, by so doing, enjoys more real happiness while he lives, and attaches greater honour to his memory when he has departed, than can be procured for their possessors by the greatest accumulation of unsanctified wealth, learning, or fame. One such example reflects more honour upon our species, and excites to more benevolent effort than the history of the most magnificent institutions; since it shows the fund of moral excellence which, through God's grace, one human heart may be made to contain; takes off the sense of dependence and insignificance which individuality is calculated to produce; sets in motion those energies which are sometimes wasted or neglected in waiting for the movements of the multitude; and cheers the solitary labourer with the hope of abounding usefulness by his own unaided exertions. Fifty such men as your sainted parent would be instrumentality enough to revolutionise, in a religious sense, a kingdom or a world. In turning away from the delightful contemplation of his bright example, we feel a melancholy coming over us, at the thought of the few whom he has left, who, as they pass his noblest monuments—the college and the chapels he has erected, are prepared to go and do likewise.

Into the hearts of some of these may God send an inspiration and an impulse through the moral portraiture which you are now preparing for the press, and by which I trust you are thus about to give a posthumous usefulness to your beloved and honoured and glorified father!

"I am, my dear Sir,
"Your attached friend,
"J. A. JAMES."

Another highly esteemed friend and transatlantic correspondent (Rev. Dr. Sprague, of Albany,) has also, at my request, favoured me with a letter on the same subject, which I subjoin.

"I cannot tell you, my dear friend, how sincerely and deeply I have sympathised with you, on the death of your lamented and venerated father. Notwithstanding several years have elapsed since I took leave of him, for the last time, I still retain a most vivid impression of what he was, and I hardly need say that his character, as it came out in everything that he said and did, constitutes the subject of some of my most rich and instructive recollections.

"The first time that I met him, as you will recollect, was early in the spring of 1828, when I made a short visit to England for the benefit of my health. Though it was only a casual introduction that I had to the family, he met me with the most unaffected good-will, and the most generous hospitality; and for three weeks I felt myself as much at home in his house, as if he had been the intimate friend, or I should rather say, the watchful guardian, of my whole life. Now that he is no more among the living, I may state to you some of the impressions that I gained of his character.

"One of the first things that struck me in respect to him, was his admirable, guileless simplicity. I had scarcely looked him in the face, and taken him by the hand, before the impression was riveted upon my mind that he was a perfectly honest man. He seemed to me as far as possible from doing anything merely for effect. Everything that he said was evidently prompted by sincere conviction, and was designed to leave on the minds of others precisely the impression that existed in his own. And how simple he was too in the sense of being unostentatious! Not an act fell under my eye, or a sentence fell upon my ear, that even seemed to indicate the least disposition to sound forth his own praise. I listened to his conversation with delight, not merely because I was always edified by it, but because he always spoke in such a perfectly unpretending manner.

"It was impossible, I think, to know him at all, without perceiving that to 'do good and to communicate,' was the ruling passion of his life. I could not but notice how his heart was in every object that contemplated the improvement, especially the moral and spiritual improvement, of his fellow-men; how fruitful he was in original suggestions, and plans of public usefulness; and how his mind kindled with fresh interest as he heard of the progress of benevolent effort, especially in our own country. Indeed it appeared to me as if his mind was as much upon the stretch for reaching benevolent ends by well-adapted means, as the mind of the greatest worldling is for laying up earthly treasure.

"The character of his piety too seemed to me most desirable and delightful. It was a beautiful compound of intelligence and feeling—was equally removed from the coldness of barren speculation, and the heat of a blind enthusiasm. There was in it also a suitable commingling of the serious and the cheerful. I should suppose that he never offended by an excess on the one side or the other. I can think of him as entering with spirit into some of our conversations that were even of an amusing character; and I can think of him too as evincing the most thoughtful and intense interest in spiritual realities; but I *cannot* think of him as having uttered a word that was fitted in any way to detract from the charm and the power of his Christian character.

"If I remember right, there was no subject upon which he seemed to dwell with deeper interest than the great importance of a well-educated ministry. The students of Highbury College particularly he seemed to me to regard with an almost parental fondness; and his agency in reference to that institution, I could well imagine, must have been the subject of some of his most hallowed and grateful remembrances. There was scarcely anything in relation to the progress of Christianity in this country [the United States] that he appeared to contemplate with so much satisfaction, as our constantly increasing facilities for obtaining a thorough theological education.

"I need not say what my recollections are of his domestic character—how bland, how dignified, how affectionate he was in every relation. You know better than I do how fine a model he was of a father; but my brief acquaintance with him was long enough to satisfy me that he united every quality that is fitted to adorn and exalt the parental character. Indeed Christianity, practical Christianity, evidently breathed in all the workings of his spirit, and controlled all the actions of his life.

"On my second visit to England, in 1836, it was a high gratification to me to find your venerable father still alive; and sure I am that no friend whom I met gave me a more cordial and affectionate greeting. Though his physical energies were not perhaps quite so great as when I saw him eight years before, yet his intellectual faculties seemed as vigorous as ever, and his desire to witness and aid the progress of the Redeemer's cause, was glowing with unabated fervour. I thought also I could perceive an increased heavenliness of spirit, which was well adapted to his circumstances as a pilgrim almost at his journey's end. I can never forget the warm and benignant look with which, as I parted with him, he gave me his hand and his blessing, and told me that our next meeting would be in heaven."

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